



## HEART OF EUROPE







*The Cathedral of Reims*

# HEART OF EUROPE

BY

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TO

E. S. C.

WHO SOME DAY MAY KNOW THE

HEART OF EUROPE

AND TO WHOM THIS BOOK MAY BE A DIM RECALLING

"OF OLD, UNHAPPY, FAR-OFF THINGS  
AND BATTLES LONG AGO"

WHITEHALL

29 AUGUST, 1915



THE author wishes to express his great sense of personal obligation to Miss Gertrude Schirmer and Mr. Emil P. Albrecht for their kindness in furnishing illustrations that otherwise could not have been obtained.



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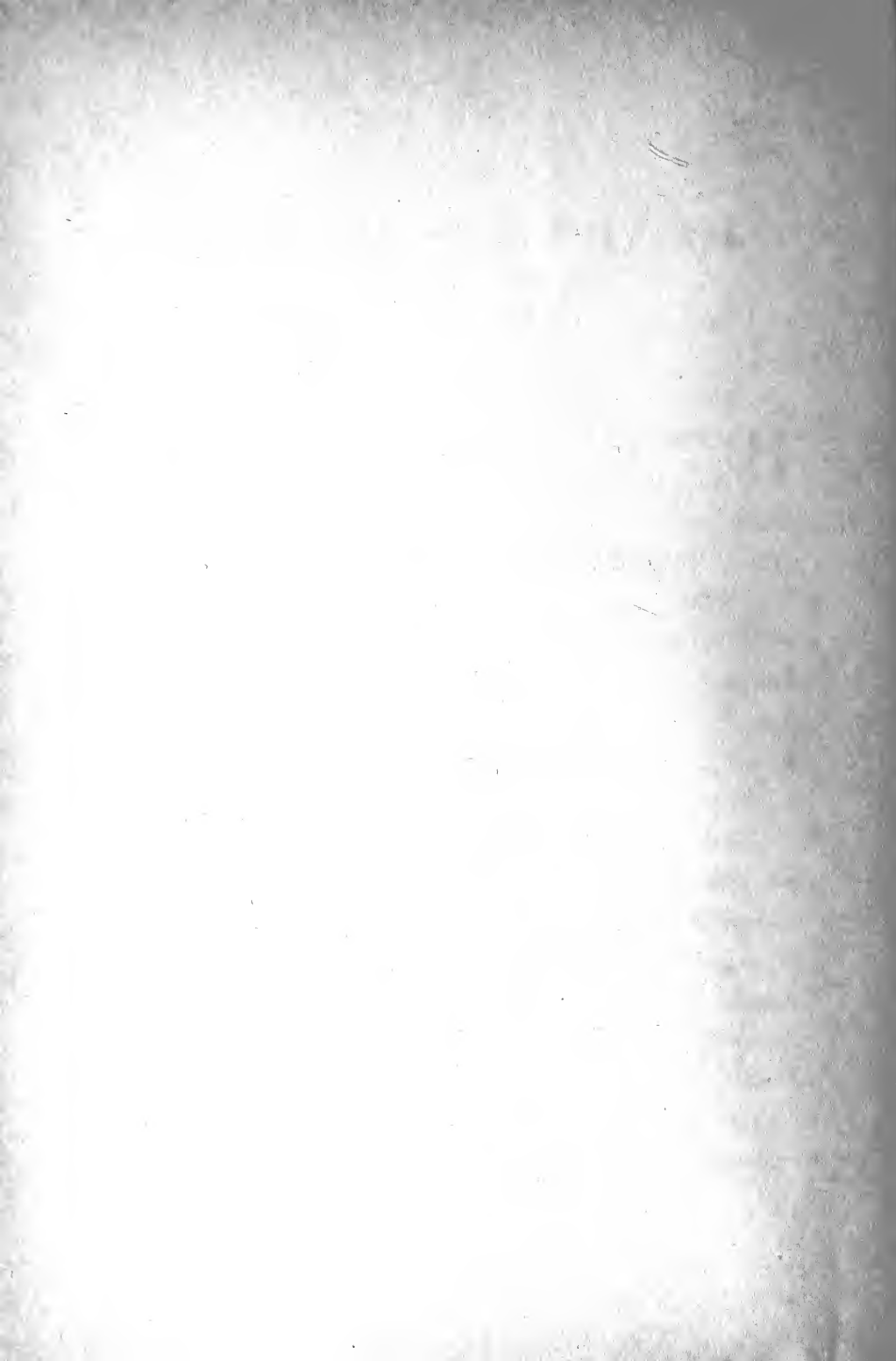
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## HEART OF EUROPE



# HEART OF EUROPE

## I

### A SANCTUARY LAID WASTE

**B**ETWEEN the Seine and the Rhine lay once a beautiful land wherein more history was made, and recorded in old monuments full of grace and grandeur and fancy, than in almost any other region of the world. The old names were best, for each aroused memory and begot strange dreams: Flanders, Brabant, the Palatinate; Picardy, Valois, Champagne, Franche-Comté; Artois, Burgundy, and Bar. And the town names ring with the same sonorous melody, evoking the ghosts of a great and indelible past: Bruges, Ghent, Louvain, and Liège; Aix-la-Chapelle, Coblenz, and Trèves; Ypres and Lille, Tournai and Fontenay, Arras and Malplaquet; Laon, Nancy, Verdun, and Varennes; Amiens, Soissons, and Reims. Cæsar, Charlemagne, St. Louis, Napoleon, with proconsuls, paladins, crusaders, and marshals unnumbered; kings, prince-bishops, monks, knights, and aureoled saints take

form and shape again at the clang of the splendid names.

And in all these places, and by all these men (and elsewhere, endlessly, and by hands unnumbered), two thousand years had wrought their visible manifestation in abbey, church, and cathedral; in manor and palace and castle, in trade hall and civic hall, and in library and seminary and school.

Wars, great and small, have swept it from river to river, but much has been free for a century and all of it free for forty years. Under every oppression and every adversity it has thriven and grown rich, not in material things alone, but in those commodities that have actual intrinsic value; and a short year ago it was the most prosperous, peaceful, and industrious quarter of Europe. Whatever the war, however violent the opposing agencies, its priceless records of architecture and other arts were piously or craftily spared, except when the madness of the French Revolution swept over its convents and cloisters, leaving Coxyde, Villers, St. Bavon, St. Jean des Vignes, the Abbaye des Lys, dead witnesses of the faith that had built them and the spared monuments as well.

And now a thing calling itself the highest civilisation in Europe, with the name of God in its mouth, again sweeps the already well-swept land. In defiance of Peace Palaces and Conferences; in spite of the bankers of the world and their double-knotted purse-strings; in spite of a socialism that said war should not happen again, and an evolutionary philosophy that said it could not happen again (men now being so civilised), the world is at war, and the old arena of Europe flames as at Armageddon, while those things too sacred for pillage and destruction by the armies and the commanders of five centuries are given over to annihilation in order that the peril of the Slav, on the other side of Europe, may not menace the treasured civilisation of the West, whose vestiges even now are blazing pyres, or cinders and ashes!

It is significant that thus far the heavy hand of the pursuer has fallen notably on two things: the school and the church; for these are two of the three things he most fears and hates. Not the school, as with him, where secularism, through economic materialism and a sinister philosophy, breeds a race as unprincipled as it is efficient and fearless, nor the church, as with him, where in-

tellectualism ousts faith, expediency morals, and God is glad "ably to support" the victorious battalions of a crown prince. Quite otherwise; the school that teaches both independence and regard for law, with religion as the only basis for right conduct, and the Church that teaches humility and the reality of sin, and the subservience of all rulers, whether king or parliament, to the religion and the authority of a living Christ speaking to-day as He spoke on the Mount of Olives.

When the University of Louvain passed in the smoke and flame of a murdered city; when the Church of St. Pierre and the Cathedral of Malines and the Shrine of Our Lady of Reims were shattered by bombs and swept by devouring fire, there was something in it all other than the grim necessity of a savage war; there was the symbol of a new thing in the world, built on all Louvain, Malines, and Reims had denied, and destroying the very outward show of what could not exist on earth side by side with its potent and dominant negation.

Reims Cathedral "stood in the line of gunfire," it was "a landmark and unfortunately could not escape," it had been "fortified by the

enemy and therefore could not be spared." All true, each statement, and thus: It stood between a brute power founded on Bismarckian force and Nietzschean antichristian philosophy, on the one hand, and on the other nations newly conscious of their Christianity, ashamed of their backsliding, and ready to fight to the death for what had made them. It *was* a landmark, a vast, visible showing forth of a great Christian spirit and a greater Christian principle, and as such it must go down. It *was* fortified, as every church is fortified, to fight against the devil and all his works, and therefore, equally with the allied forces behind it, it was fighting against a common enemy. If by its ruin it can make this universally and eternally clear, we can see it go without a tear or a regret, for, like the martyr in the Roman arena, it has accomplished its work.

Thus far, of the great cities, Liège, Louvain, Malines, Ypres, Arras, and Reims are gone, with the greater part of their treasured art, while Laon, Soissons, and Namur have been grievously wrecked. Apparently, Amiens, Noyon, Bruges, and Ghent are now safe, but endless opportunities open for destruction and pillage, and we may well be prepared for irreparable loss before the

invader is hurled back across his natural river frontier. Let us consider, not what already has been annihilated, but the kind of art it was, so measuring, in a degree, the quality of our loss—and of what we still may lose.

First of all, there are the towns themselves, for all art is not concentrated in hôtel de ville and cathedral; it shows itself sometimes in more appealing guise in the river villages and proud cities, and its testimony to a great past is here equally potent. Ypres, Malines, Dinant, Termonde, and Huy, all of which are gone, were treasures that belonged to all the world; Namur and Plombières we could not spare, and as for Bruges and Ghent, even apart from their exquisite architecture and their treasures of painting, the soul shudders at what might happen there were they involved in the retreat of a disorganised army, when one considers what happened to Liège and Louvain in its victorious advance. All Belgium and Luxembourg, all Picardy and Champagne are, or were, rich with lovely little towns and villages, each a work of art in itself; they are shrivelling like a garden under the first frost, and, it may be, in a little while none will remain.



The major architecture of this unhappy land falls into three classes and three periods of time. Oldest and most priceless are the churches, and these are of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, the ages when religion was one and secure and was building a great civilisation that we would fain see equalled again. Then come the town halls and guildhalls of the fifteenth century, each speaking for the proud freedom of merchant and burgher, when the hold of religion was weakening a little, and the first signs were showing themselves of what, in the end, was to have issue in this war of wars; finally come the town houses of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in all their quaint individuality and their overriding self-esteem, though fine still, and with hints of the great art that already had passed.

Brussels is full of these, and Antwerp; Louvain had them, and Ypres, Termonde, Arras, and Charleville, only a few months ago; in Bruges and Ghent they fill whole streets and stand in silent accusation of what we of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have offered as our contribution to the housing of civilisation.

Of the civic halls the list is endless: Brussels,

Malines, Bruges, Ypres, Ghent, Antwerp, Mons, Audenaarde, Termonde and Liège; Compiègne, St. Quentin, Arras, Valenciennes; ranging from the grave solemnity of the enormous and wide-spread Ypres to the lacy fantasticism of Louvain and Audenaarde. Architecture has gone far from the Salle Synodale of Sens and the Merveille of Mont-St.-Michel, and it has not gone altogether well, but how significant these stone fancies are of the abounding life and the splendid pride and the open-handed beneficence of the fifteenth-century burghers, who loved their towns and bent the rebellious masonry to their will, working it into a kind of stony lace and embroidery to the glory of trade and civic spirit! If we should lose them now, as we almost lost Louvain, standing in the midst of the roaring flame and drifting smoke, while tall churches and rich universities and fair old houses crumbled and died around it, what should we not lose?

And the churches, those matchless monuments, four, five, and six centuries old, where generations have brought all their best to glorify God, where glass and sculpture, tapestries and fretted woodwork, pictures, and gold and silver wrought cunningly into immortal art—how are we to

speaking of these, or think of them, with St. Pierre of Louvain and St. Rombaut of Malines still smoking with their dying fires, while piece by piece the calcined stone falls in the embers, and while Reims, one of the wonders of the world, stands gaunt and shattered, wrecked by bombs, swept by fire, its windows that rivalled Chartres split into irremediable ruin, its statues devastated that once stood on a level with the sculptures of Greece?

The catastrophe itself is so unthinkable that the world does not now half realise it. And yet, what of all that remains in the pathway—backward or forward—of Attila and his Huns? St. Gudule of Brussels, St. Bavon of Ghent, and the cathedrals of Antwerp, Tongres, and Tournai; and in France that matchless sequence of which Reims was once the central jewel, Soissons, Senlis and Noyon, St. Remi, Amiens, and Laon; here, with Reims, are seven churches such as man never surpassed, and equalled only at Paris, Chartres, Coutances, and Bourges; each is of a different *timbre*, each a different expression of the greatest century of Christian civilisation, and, given the opportunity, there is no reason why each should not suffer the fate of Reims.

There is a thin and sinister philosophy, akin to that of Treitschke and Nietzsche (which is for to-day what Machiavelli was for the sixteenth century), that avows no building, no consummate work of art of any kind, "worth the bones of a Pomeranian grenadier," justifying its statement on the basis of a superficial humanism. Never was a more malignant ethic. A man is valuable in proportion to what he is and does for righteous society, and for what he makes of himself as a free and immortal soul responsible to God. Go through the roaring mills of Crefeld and Essen, the futile pleasure-haunts of Homburg and Wiesbaden, the bureaux and barracks and palaces of Berlin; you will find—as similarly in every country—hundreds of thousands of peasants, workmen, and aristocrats whose contribution to Christian civilisation is nothing, and will be nothing however long they may live; who forget their souls and deny their God, and of these we can say, it is not the bones of a Pomeranian grenadier or even the bones of a Prussian *Junker* that weigh more in the scale than Reims or Louvain, it is not a million of these that mean so much for service and the glory of God, as one such potent influence as Amiens or Reims, or the

library and schools of Louvain, or the pictures of Memling and the Van Eycks in Bruges and Antwerp and Ghent.

Those that cry loudest for the sanctity of human life and its priority before art and letters, most insistently hurl a hundred thousand lives against inevitable death, and spread black starvation over myriads of women and children, in order that their privilege of selling inferior and unnecessary products to far-away savages may be preserved intact. Against this set the cathedrals and universities and the exquisite art of France and Belgium and the Rhine; consider what it meant once, what it means even now, what for the future it is destined to mean as never before.

For the old passes: the old that began with Machiavelli and is ending with von Bernhardi. It is not alone Prussia that will be purged by the fire of an inevitable conflict, nor Germany, nor all the Teuton lands; it is the whole world, that sold its birthright for a mess of pottage and now, in terror of the price at last to be paid, denounces the infamous contract and fights to the death against the armies of the Moloch it helped to fashion. And when the field is won, what happens but the coming into its own again of the

very power that made Reims and Louvain, the recovery of the old and righteous and Christian standard of values, the building on the ruins of five centuries of a new civilisation where whatever art that remains will play its due part as the revealer of that Absolute Truth that brought it into being, forgotten now for very long? Then the pictures of Flanders and Umbria and Tuscany, the sculpture of France, the music of Teuton and Slav, the "minor arts" of all mediævalism, the architecture of Bourges and Amiens and Chartres will both reveal and inspire with doubled power.

And in all and through all, Reims in its ruin will be a more potent agency of regeneration than the perfection of Chartres or the finality of Bourges.

I should like to consider, though briefly and in the light of a very real unity that negated the political disunity that has always prevailed, the art of these lands where for a twelvemonth millions of men have fought after a fashion never known before, while around them each day saw the irreparable destruction of the best that man could do for the love of God, and better than he can do now. In spite of constantly changing



THE HALL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUVAIN





frontiers and dynastic vicissitudes, the great unity of mediævalism blends the Rhineland, Flanders, Brabant, Luxembourg, Artois, Champagne, Eastern Normandy, Eastern France, into a consistent whole, so far as all real things are concerned. In spite of its bickerings and fightings and jealousies and plots and counterplots, Europe was really more united, more a working whole, during the Middle Ages than ever it has been since. One religion and one philosophy did for the fluctuant states what the Reformation, democracy, and "enlightenment" could only undo, and in this vanishing art, which, after all, is the truest history man can record, we find the dynamic force, the creative power, of a culture and a civilisation that took little count of artificial barriers between perfectly artificial nations, but included all in the greatest and most beneficent syntheses Europe has ever known.

The art of this land—or these lands, if you like—should be so considered; not as an interesting and even stimulating by-product of social, industrial, and political evolution, with only an accidental relationship to them, and only an empirical interest for the men of to-day, but as the most perfect material expression of the great

reality that existed through and by these agencies that were in themselves nothing; the character that emerged through the turmoil of human activity, as it shows itself in the men and women of the time, and expresses itself in their art.

To do this fully is impossible; every province would require a volume, every art a series of volumes, but at least we can catalogue again the more salient qualities of the greater masterpieces, and try to co-ordinate them into some outward semblance of that essential unity they both promised and expressed.

## II

### THE FORGING OF MEDIÆVALISM

**I**T is not a large land, this Heart of Europe; three hundred and fifty miles perhaps from the Alps to the sea, and not more than two hundred and fifty from the Seine at Paris to the Rhine at Cologne; half the size, shall we say, of Texas; but what Europe was for the thousand years following the fall of Rome, this little country—or the men that made it great—was responsible. Add the rest of Normandy, and the spiritual energy of the Holy See, with a varying and sometimes negligible influence from the Teutonic lands beyond the Rhine, and you have the mainsprings of mediævalism, even though for its full manifestation you must take into account the men in the far countries of the Italian peninsula and the Iberian, in France and England, Bavaria, Saxony, Bohemia.

The great empires of to-day, England, France, Germany, Italy, two of which have eaten steadily into its territories until only a tiny Luxembourg remains, together with a small new state with a

novel name made greater and more lasting by the events of a year than those of its predecessors, have dulled the memory of an ancient unity, taking to themselves at the same time credit, that is none of theirs, for men and happenings that made ten centuries of enduring history; so the glory, the high achievements of the small old states are forgotten. And yet, out of these little dukedoms and counties and free cities came the men who made France and Germany, who determined the genius of mediævalism, imparted to it the high soul and the swift hand of its peculiar personality, and gave to the world the memory and tradition of faith and heroism, together with so much of that inimitable art that was its perfect showing forth, and, until yesterday, a visible monument of its accomplishment.

National unity this territory and these peoples have never possessed. During the Roman dominion they formed the provinces of Germania and Belgica, in the diocese of Gaul; under the Merovingians all was comprised in the Frankish kingdom, the old line between the Roman provinces remaining to divide Austrasia and Neustria, as the northern and southern sections came to be called under the Carolings. With the disruption of the

empire of Charlemagne, Austrasia went to the kingdom of the East Franks, Neustria to that of the West Franks, the former becoming (west of the Rhine) the duchies of Upper and Lower Lorraine, the latter (east of the Seine) Flanders and Champagne. When Otto the Great restored the Holy Roman Empire in A. D. 962, the Lorraines of course formed a part. These comprised all that is now (or was, in June, 1915) Germany west of the Rhine, together with all of Belgium except Flanders, Luxembourg, and a strip of territory along the northeast frontier of France. Westward to the Seine the land was divided into many feudal holdings, Flanders, which then comprised not only northern Belgium but the present French departments of Nord and Pas de Calais; Champagne, Amiens, Vermandois, Laon, Reims, Châlons. During the Middle Ages Lower Lorraine became the duchy of Brabant and the county of Hainault. Upper Lorraine, Luxembourg and Bar, southern Flanders, Artois. Picardy and Valois became entities, and the great bishoprics of Cologne, Trèves, Strasbourg, Cambrai, Liège acquired more and more land until they were principalities in themselves.

During the fifteenth century the magnificent

efforts of the dukes of Burgundy to create for themselves an independent state between France and the Empire, and reaching from the Rhine to the Aisne, from the Alps to the sea, resulted in a partial and temporary unification of the old Belgian lands, but with the death of Mary of Burgundy in 1482, the whole territory became more and more closely knit into the Empire, France losing even her claim to suzerainty over Flanders; all the lands west of the Meuse and over the Rhine as far as the Ems became the Netherlands, comprising roughly what is now Holland and Belgium. The duchies of Luxembourg, Bar, and Lorraine, with the Palatinate, shared all that lay between the Meuse and the Rhine, save what the great bishoprics had assumed to themselves, while Burgundy (except the Franche-Comté) and Lorraine were definitively merged in France.

Then came the Spanish dominion over the whole territory, barring the duchy of Julich along the Rhine; the revolt of Holland and the severing of the United Netherlands north of the Rhine from the Spanish territories; finally, in 1715, after 160 years of ruinous domination, Spain was driven out and Austria succeeded in Flanders,

Brabant, and Luxembourg, maintaining herself there until the time of Napoleon a century later, when for a few years everything as far as the Rhine, together with the Netherlands on the other side, was incorporated in France. With the fading of the splendid dream of a Napoleonic empire, Holland and Belgium, as we know them now, came into existence, the lands of the duchy of Julich went to Prussia, the Palatinate to Bavaria. Luxembourg was reduced to its existing area and the French frontier delimited as it is now, except for Alsace and Lorraine, which were lost in 1870.

Between the upper and nether millstones of France and the Empire, the Heart of Europe for fifteen centuries has been ground into fragments of ever-changing form, never able to coalesce into unity, but producing ever in spite of political chaos and dynastic oppression great ideals of piety, righteousness, liberty; great art-manifestations of the vigour and nobility of race, great figures to uphold and enforce the lofty principles that have made so much of the brilliant history of mediæval Europe, and all centring around the lands of the many tribes who from earliest times were known as the Belgæ.

They enter well into history, these Belgæ, in the fifty-seventh year before the birth of Christ, Nervii, Veromandri, Atrobates, from the valleys of the Meuse and the Sambre, as Cæsar found and declared, "that day against the Nervii," when the battle for the winning of this new land was his by hardly more than a chance. The tribes were hard and free, and they died in the end almost to a man, five hundred remaining out of fifty thousand warriors. But Cæsar was magnanimous, as always, and by no means without appreciation of his adversaries, so Allies of Rome, with full claim on her protection, they became, with the rank and title of a free people, as they have remained at heart ever since. In seven years the last of the tribes had surrendered and Belgium became a flourishing colony as well as the advance-guard of Roman civilisation in its progress against the savage Germans of the Rhine. By the fall of the Empire a great and united people had come into being between Gaul and Germania, divided into four great sections with their several capitols at Trèves, Reims, Mainz, and Cologne.

Meanwhile the Franks had come on the scene, though their name is rather a rallying-cry than



a mark of race, meaning only that certain of the tribes of Gaul, with others of the Belgæ, were determined to be free—as they became shortly and as they have generally remained ever since. Now the Salian Franks were the dwellers in Flanders and Brabant and under their Duke Clodion had extended their borders as far as Soissons. Clodion's successor, Merovæus, was grandfather of Clovis, the first Christian king of the north. The Merovings, then, are neither strictly of Gaul nor of Germany, but of the Heart of Europe itself, and their blood, like that of their followers, a mingling of Germanic and Celtic and Roman strains.

Châlons saw them allied with the Romans and driving back the fierce tide of the earlier Huns that threatened to beat out the last flicker of light in Europe: Tolbiac saw them hurl back the savage Allemanni, in the year 496, again preserving the European tradition from submergence under barbarian hordes, nor was this the last time they were to perform this service. Already Clovis had married Clotilde, niece of the Duke of Burgundy, so bringing another region into close contact with his own, and now, after the successful issue of the battle of Tolbiac, when

he had first called on the God of Christians, he presented himself before the Archbishop of Reims, St. Remi, for baptism, where he heard the significant words: "Bow thy proud head, Sicambrian! destroy what thou hast worshipped, worship what thou hast destroyed."

Whatever the motive, and however inadequate the performance of his new obligations by Clovis, his baptism is one of the crucial events in history, marking the end of paganism as a controlling force, and with the conquest of Italy by Theodoric and the promulgation of the Holy Rule of St. Benedict, the beginning of the great Christian era of culture and civilisation that was to endure, unimpaired, for a thousand years.

The dominion of Clovis comprised all that is now France south to the Loire and Burgundy, with Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, and Bavaria, but his capitol was at Tournai, and he was in fact even more a Belgian than a French sovereign. Under him all the Franks were united and his power was such that the Emperor at Constantinople made him patrician, consul, and Augustus. With his death in 511 began a long era of division and reunion, of internecine warfare and the plotting of jealous women, two of whom, Frede-

gonde personifying the Gallic influence, Brunhilde the Germanic, fostered a conflict that hardly came to an end before the fall of the dynasty.

Little by little the Merovings broke away from their racial Belgic affiliations, Soissons became the capital rather than Tournai, and at last by a dramatic turn of fate another Belgian race brought the decrepit line to its term and founded a new and a nobler house. Pepin of Landen, in the province of Liège, became mayor of the palace and the active influence in royal affairs, somewhere about the year 620, and it was a son of his daughter, Pepin of Herstel (a town also in the province of Liège), who was father of Charles Martel, who in his turn was the grandfather of Charlemagne.

As the Huns and the Allemanni had been rolled back from their savage incursions by the aid of men of Belgic nationality, so now the greater threat of an onrushing Monammedanism was to be dispelled by another and a greater personality, Charles the Hammer, a soldier of consummate ability, the real ruler of all the Franks, and the victor at the battle of Tours when final decision was reached as to whether Europe was for the future to be Moslem or Christian.

Charles Martel died when only fifty years of age, and his son Pepin succeeded him as mayor of the palace. The fiction of Meroving kingship could no longer be maintained; the stock was hopelessly degenerate; the people demanded an end, the Pope sanctioned it, and so, after a most orderly fashion Childeric III betook himself to a convenient cloister, Pepin was raised on the shields of the Gallic soldiers, then decently crowned in St. Denis, and the dynasty of the Carolings began. For sixteen years he reigned as kings had not been wont to reign for many centuries; Saxony, Brittany, Languedoc were added to the Frankish dominions, Rome twice saved from the Lombard invaders, and the Papacy made the faithful ally and defender of the Frankish kingdom, then the one great power in Europe.

There were more reasons than that of policy for this alliance. Practically abandoned by the Roman Emperors in the east, Italy had been the prey of tribe after tribe of northern savages, and the Papacy was the only centre of order and authority. In spite of this the Popes still shrank from severing themselves wholly from the imperial centre, but the iconoclastic controversy had resulted in what was both heresy and schism on

the part of the patriarchate of Constantinople, and communion was no longer possible. Moreover, all the other northern tribes that had accepted Christianity—Goths, Vandals, Lombards—had adopted the Arian heresy and were therefore even more distasteful to Rome than unconverted heathen. This condition of things justified the Papacy in its attitude of intolerance, and when Pepin came to the throne, it was almost at the last gasp, through persecution, spoliation, and outrage at the hands of the Teutonic Arians. The Frankish kingdom alone was Catholic, and enthusiastically Catholic, and it is small wonder that to the Pope the rise of a great and powerful and Catholic nation under the dominating Carolings came as a special mercy from heaven—as, indeed, it was.

With the death of Pepin and the accession of his son Charles—known now for all time as Charlemagne—the curtain rose on one of the most brilliant dramas of history. The Lombards had again revolted; Pope Hadrian called on the Franks in despair; King Charles hurled his armies into Italy like an avalanche, captured and deposed Desiderius, last of the Lombard kings, proclaimed himself King of Lombardy, pressed

on to Rome, and was welcomed there by the Supreme Pontiff as the saviour of Christendom.

He would, however, accept no formal honours save that of patrician, and returned to the north to continue the work of his father in consolidating and extending the kingdom. For twenty-four years he was engaged in innumerable wars, in eager efforts to restore education, political order, ecclesiastical righteousness, and even some small measure of genuine culture, with results that seem miraculous in the light of what had been before for so many centuries. Finally, in the year 799, he went again to Rome, where Leo III now sat in the chair of Peter, and at mass on Christmas Day, A. D. 800, the Pope came suddenly behind him as he was kneeling before the altar in St. Peter's and, placing a crown on his head, cried in a loud voice: "Life and victory to Charles, the great and pacific Emperor of the Romans, crowned by the hand of God!" and after three centuries and more of anarchy, barbarism, and hopeless degeneration, the empire was restored as the Holy Roman Empire, in the person of a Frankish warrior of the lands of the Belgæ, and destined to endure for another thousand years.

Aix-la-Chapelle is the very centre of the land

and the people that built up the Christian civilisation of the Middle Ages, and it was here that Charlemagne fixed his chief place of residence. During his lifetime it was the very, and the only, centre of order and of culture in Europe. A great warrior, he was an even greater administrator, while as the restorer of learning and the patron of art and letters he was perhaps greatest of all. When he came to the throne there lay behind him nearly four centuries of absolute anarchy and barbarism, from the Baltic to the Mediterranean and from the Atlantic to the marches of the Teutonic savages. What he built he built from the ground upward, and though his was only the "false dawn" that heralds the day, passing utterly, so far as one could see, within a generation after his death, it was the saving of Europe, the preservation of the succession, that, the second Dark Ages overpassed, guaranteed the coming in of the great era that began with the millennial year of Christianity and lasted for five full centuries.

Under his direction a complete administrative system was established over the unwieldy empire; local governments were set up, with a system of regular visitations from the central authority,

and in this way the foundations were laid for the counties of Flanders, Brabant, Hainault, into which, together with Vermandois, Valois, Amiens, and Champagne, this territory of our survey was divided during the Middle Ages.

In religion, education, and art Charlemagne went far beyond his predecessors for five centuries, so far as the form and re-creation are concerned. Separated at last from the church in the East, now definitely schismatic, heretical, and Erastian, the Papacy was in a position to go on unhindered in its development, and Charlemagne became not only a defender but a zealous and enthusiastic reformer. Monasticism was universally strengthened and extended, new bishoprics were founded, the state of the Holy See purified, while schools were established in connection with cathedrals and monasteries throughout the Empire. Charles had a great passion for scholars and artists, gathering them from Italy, Spain, England, wherever, indeed, they were to be found, and for a time his court was the nucleus of culture in the West. Architecture was reborn, all the ravelled threads from Rome, Constantinople, Ravenna, Syria were gathered up and knit together, and though few authentic works from

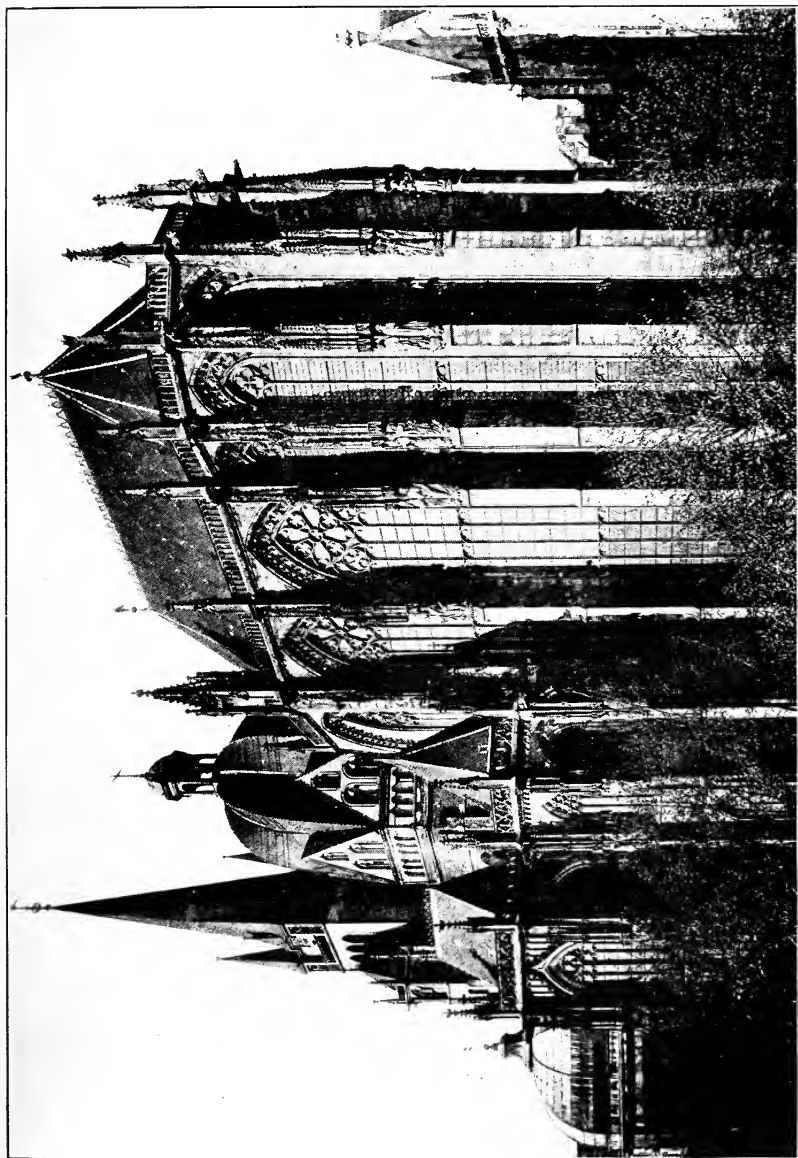


among the myriads of the Emperor's creation still remain, we know from what we have, and chiefly the royal chapel at Aix, that the result was the restoring once more of a line of continuity after the vast vacancy of the Dark Ages, and the initiation of a new vitality that, after the second Dark Ages, was to serve as the energising power that brought Romanesque art into existence and made possible the great glory of Gothic.

Great as he was, Charlemagne had all the weaknesses of his racial tradition, and by yielding to these his era was his alone, nor could it outlast his personal influence. Divided between his successors, the Empire rapidly and naturally fell to pieces during the lifetime of Louis le Debonnaire, who for a brief period had succeeded in uniting it again, and during the second Dark Ages, from 850 to 1000 A. D., there is no more of note to record in this region than in any other part of Europe. The era had culminated under Charlemagne; it was now to sink to its end, as always had happened before, as always, so far as we can see, must continue to happen. Not until the turn of the tide at the year 1000 could a real recovery begin. In the meantime history is little more than a series of personal contests, but out of these

certain beginnings are made that are to have issue in great things, and amongst these are the appearance of the first Baldwin of Flanders and the establishing of the first hereditary title, and therefore the oldest in Europe. Baldwin of the Iron Arm successfully fought the Vikings, driving them west until they were forced to content themselves with the land they ultimately made immortal as Normandy. His son married a daughter of Alfred the Great, so establishing a certain connection between England and Flanders, and by fortifying Bruges, Ypres, Ghent, and Courtrai, he did much toward fixing these cities as centres of municipal life and of that fierce independence that marked them for so many generations.

With the opening of the new era, at the beginning of the eleventh century, a new vitality shows itself in the land. William of Normandy had become the son-in-law of Baldwin V, and from Flanders many knights joined the Conqueror for his invasion of England, one becoming first Earl of Northumberland, another first Earl of Chester. Under Baldwin VI complete peace was restored to the distracted provinces, while the Charter of Grammont is a landmark in that development



THE CHAPEL AT AIX



of personal and civil liberty which is one of the great glories of mediævalism. The Tribunal of Peace, established by the Bishop of Liège, is another shining sign of the times, while the defeat of France in its attacks on Flemish independence assured a long period of splendid development.

This was enhanced by the Crusades, and here, particularly in the first, the Heart of Europe showed the quality of the blood that was its life. Whatever the Crusades may have become after long years, they were in their earliest impulse supreme examples of human faith, unselfishness, devotion, heroism, and piety. The redemption of the Holy Places of Christianity from the infidel became a passion, and the protagonist, the moving and vitalising spirit, was one Peter the Hermit, of the province of Liège, who, crucifix in hand, toiled through eastern France, the Netherlands, the Rhineland, as well as through his own country, exhorting prince and peasant to take up arms for the freeing of the Holy Land from the Saracen.

His success was almost miraculous, for the great adventure appealed to every instinct of the time—piety, reverence, chivalry, romance,

the passion for a new and venturesome and knightly quest—and in less than two years the Pope himself set his seal of approbation on the First Crusade. In Clermont, in the year 1095, surrounded by four hundred bishops and mitred abbots, he cried to the waiting multitudes of Europe: “Are we called upon to see in this century the desolation of Christianity and to remain at peace the while our holy religion is given over into the hands of the oppressor? Here is a lawful war; go, defend the House of Israel!” Almost with a single voice Europe made answer with the rallying-cry: “God wills it!” Every scarlet garment was shredded in pieces to furnish crosses which were sewn to the shoulders; some even branded themselves with the sign of the cross by means of red-hot irons.

Within another year an army of 100,000 men had been gathered together, under the leadership of Peter, himself, and it poured across Europe as far as Constantinople, a disorganised and impotent mob. It met its fate as soon as it had crossed the Bosphorus into Saracen territory, and only a shattered remnant, including the originator of the mad venture, ever returned to its home. In the meantime, however, a greater

captain than Peter the Hermit, and of the same race, was gathering the enormous host that succeeded where he had failed. Godfrey of Bouillon, of the province of Liège, a great scholar and greater soldier, gathered 90,000 knights and men-at-arms in Flanders and Brabant, and set out for Jerusalem on the 10th of August, 1096. A month later the French under command of the King's brother, and the Flemings under Robert, Count of Flanders, followed in his track. Baldwin of Bourg, the Counts of Hainault, Namur, Grez, Audenaarde, and Ypres, with knights of Dixmude, Alost, Bruges, Ghent, Brussels, and Tournai were amongst the leaders, and a concentration was effected at Constantinople when there were no less than 600,000 in all. Crossing into Asia, the great host swept onward from one victory to another; the battle of Dorylæum, fought on the 4th of July, 1097, proved them invincible. Tarsus and Antioch fell, and nothing lay between them and Jerusalem. The city was besieged and finally carried by assault, the attack beginning on the 14th of July, and after a week of incessant fighting on the walls and through the streets, Jerusalem was wholly in the hands of the Crusaders. But the host that set out from its many

sources in Europe had vanished and only a tenth of the original number remained to fight the relieving army from Egypt at Ascalon, and to organise the victory. Five hundred thousand men had perished on the long march, died of disease, or fallen in battle.

Godfrey of Bouillon became the first King of Jerusalem, the choice resting between him and Robert of Flanders. He reigned only a year, and was succeeded by his brother Baldwin, who had made himself Count of Edessa, and whose descendants continued on the throne for several generations.

In all the succeeding Crusades, Flanders and Brabant, Lorraine, Champagne, and Burgundy played leading parts, and in the fifth, when the arms of the knights were turned from the relief of Jerusalem to the conquest of the Byzantine Empire, another Baldwin of Flanders was leader, and, after the fall of Constantinople, became the first Latin Emperor of the East, his dynasty continuing on the throne for fifty years.

Amazing as were the results of the Crusades, with the conquering of the Saracens in the Holy Land, and the overthrow of the Eastern Empire, a Walloon being crowned first King of Jerusalem



and a Fleming first Latin Emperor of Byzantium, the local results had no permanency, Jerusalem falling again to the Mussulmans after a century and a half, Constantinople reverting to the Eastern line at about the same time. In Europe, however, the results had been of profound import; directly, the Crusades had had a vast influence in determining the temper and the course of mediævalism, indirectly they had laid the foundations of the industrial supremacy of the Belgian cities and of the emancipation of the people from feudalism. The Saracen of the twelfth century was the antithesis of the Ottoman Turk of to-day, and from him the Crusaders learned much to their advantage, while from the Eastern Empire came new impulses toward the development of a broader culture than the West alone could have achieved. So far as the cities of Flanders, Brabant, and Lorraine were concerned, the absence of their martial and turbulent knights was by no means an unmixed catastrophe. The vast expeditions demanded vast expenditures: money came generally into use in place of barter; the common people who remained at home developed their industries, increased their wealth, and in the end took into their own hands much of the business

of the government. The habit and tradition of independence and liberty which so grew up, maintained itself steadily against all assaults, nor has it lapsed or waned, as the last year has gloriously proved, and many of the tall towers that became the recognised symbol of civic independence still stand in testimony, though one by one they are falling before the armed negation of all they rose to proclaim.

### III

#### FLANDERS AND BRABANT

IN a study such as this tries to be, it is, of course, impossible to consider in any degree the history of those portions of the chosen territory that joined themselves to, or were by force incorporated in, the great surrounding states. The Rhineland, in spite of its minor vicissitudes of lordship, is and has always been Germanic, and its annals are part and parcel of those of the Teutonic Holy Roman Empire and of the German Empire that succeeded it. The marshes of the mouth of the Rhine early differentiated themselves both from Germany and from the Gallic provinces farther south; Dutch they were and Dutch they will ever remain; their history and their culture and their art are by themselves. The same is true of Champagne, Picardy, Burgundy, Bar, and of the lands between them and the Seine. This is France, and its history is the history of France even if its art takes enduring colour from a persistent quality in its people that is its own and not simply that of the Franks and

Normans and Celts who coalesced around the old Île de France to the building of one of the great peoples and one of the great states in history. Each gave more than it received when it became a part of a state that was slowly building itself out of assembling races and peoples, but each was like the daughter of a house; however much she might bring to some alliance, of fortune or character or power, she became merged in her new family, forsaking her name and accepting that of her chosen spouse, together with his ambitions, his interests, and his fortunes. We may then consider the outlying lands of our central district as so many fair daughters who have allied themselves with suitors from neighbouring territories; remembering them with affection, taking pride in the dowries they have carried with them, but confining ourselves to the fortunes of the men of the line who have preserved the family name and defended its honour in the field. In this sense Flanders, Brabant, and Luxembourg are the three princes to whom was given the defence of the patrimony that has been theirs from the ancient times of the earliest beginnings of the house amongst the Gallic and Germanic tribes of the Rhine valley, the meadows

and uplands of the Scheldt and the Meuse and the Sambre, and in the Forest of Ardennes.

As the Heart of Europe gradually became parcelled out between the great adjoining empires, each taking its colour more or less from the central influences, while in every instance contributing something in its turn to the sum that made up the varying greatness of both, the essential qualities of the original Belgæ seemed to concentrate in the little province of Flanders, which, during the whole of the Middle Ages, played a part in Europe strikingly disproportionate to its size, which was less than half that of the State of Connecticut, though it contained over 1,200,000 people and counted cities like Ghent with 250,000 population, Ypres with 200,000, Bruges and Courtrai with 100,000 each. At the same time London could boast only 35,000 citizens. In trade, industry, wealth, culture, and the standard of living Flanders was far in advance of the rest of northern Europe, while it was marked by a perfect passion for liberty not only for the state but for each individual member thereof.

Every portion of the land we are considering made its own contribution, early or late, to the great sum of mediævalism, but it would be im-

possible to consider, even superficially, the gifts of Champagne, Burgundy, the Rhineland. This book does not assume to be a history, it is only a sequence of notes on the lost or imperilled art of the Heart of Europe, with just so much of history as may serve to suggest what lay behind and gave this art its peculiar and unmatched quality.

The great elements that entered into this art and this civilisation that were pre-eminently the art and civilisation of Christianity were primarily two: northern blood and monastic fervour. To the worn-out vitality of the Mediterranean races came in the fresh vigour of the North, Lombard, Germanic, Norman, Frank, while the monastic impulse imparted by St. Benedict broke the spell of the Dark Ages, made possible the "false dawn" of Carolingian civilisation, and then, through its successors, the monks of Cluny in the eleventh century and the Cistercians in the twelfth, brought to perfection and to complete fulness of expression all the latent possibilities in the clean new blood that had been transfused into the hardening veins of an Europe already dangerously near dissolution.

These elements of new blood were chiefly supplied by the Franks (both of the East and the

West), the Burgundians, and the Normans, the latter being descendants of the Vikings from the Baltic. The Belgæ were a subdivision of the Franks, and made up of several tribes, Trevii, Eburones, Nervii, etc. Generally speaking, they were Germanic, with a considerable Celtic admixture. The Cluniac and Cistercian reforms came from Burgundy, which is partially within the limits of our study, though later they received great accessions of strength from natives of Flanders, Brabant, the Rhineland, and Champagne. During the eleventh century Normandy was the spiritual centre, the dynamic force, of Europe, while in the twelfth century the leadership was assumed by the Île de France, as wholly under the inspiration of the Cistercians as Normandy had been under that of the Cluniacs. It was during these two centuries that the great burst of Norman and of Gothic architecture occurred in the Île de France, in Normandy, and in Champagne.

The contributions of the land we now know as Belgium were quite different; they were at the same time a product of mediæval culture and one of its causes, for they grew out of the deep and vital impulses beneath the whole epoch, while they seemed to determine many of its

manifestations. The first of these, the Crusades, has already been referred to; the second, the great guild system, with its concomitant, the commune, and its result, a desire for personal, civic, and national liberty that became a passion, needs some consideration, since it is from this that came so much of the later mediæval art of Flanders and Brabant that is so priceless and so appallingly in danger of destruction.

Just how and why the Flemings should have become a nation of weavers, merchants, and traders is hard to say, but even in the tenth century, weaving had become so important an industry a charter was granted the guild of weavers by Count Baldwin. The supply of wool came overseas from England, where an important market for the finished wares was also found, and as a result a close community of interests sprang up between Flanders and East Anglia. Without natural protection of any kind, the land lying open to any invasion, walled cities became imperative, as well as unions for self-defence, and so came the great and rich and defiant cities such as Ghent and Bruges, Ypres and Courtrai. When the nobles and knights flocked off on crusade, the citizens remained at home, and they



were not slow to seize the opportunity offered them of acquiring, almost without protest, the civil power that, elsewhere, under a dominant and universal feudalism, remained in the hands of the barons.

By this time the development of the guilds had reached enormous proportions, and the members were so numerous, so highly organised, and so defiant of molestation they were almost irresistible. In Ghent, for example, there were more than 50,000 enrolled craftsmen and artificers in the thirteenth century; in Bruges there were the four great trading guilds of wool merchants, linen merchants, mercers, and brewers, and in addition no less than fifty-two guilds of craftsmen. These guilds were not only for the protection of the interests of their members, they equally aimed at maintaining the highest possible standard in their products (so differentiating themselves sharply from the contemporary trade-union), while they demanded and received civic rights and privileges unheard of before and elsewhere. Finally they were military as well as civil in their nature, all the members being trained to arms and under competent military direction. The actual power they could exert is shown by the fact that at one

time the weavers in Ghent put an efficient army of 40,000 men into the field. Every man was bound to answer the alarm-bell of his own guild on the instant, and so came the great bell-towers that stood not only as the source of warning and the rallying-place, but also as visible evidences of the liberty of the men who obeyed the summons from their great bourdons.

Never before or since has skilled labour occupied a more advantageous position than in Flanders in the thirteenth century; wages were high, life liberal and self-respecting, comforts and even luxuries common to all, while the high standard of workmanship made labour dignified and enjoyable, and close union of interests guaranteed the protection of all against the aggressions of the nobles and the feudal system.

Offsetting the gains were corresponding losses. Successful industry, through group action, together with the consequent development of the town unit, resulted in a general loss of any national or racial spirit. The interests of each man were those of his guild or town, and during the entire Middle Ages there was the most kaleidoscopic grouping and regrouping of towns and provinces, now against the Empire, now against



ST. BAVON'S TOWER, GHENT



France, Burgundy, England, now against each other or some count or duke working in his turn for dynastic or political dominance. Another cause of dissension was the complicated absurdity of feudal tenure, whereby the French-speaking people of Brabant and Lorraine were united to the Empire, the Flemings to France, while, as happened in the case of the Count of Flanders, a prince might be one of the Twelve Peers of France, and a vassal of the King, and yet be vassal to the Emperor for portions of his land. The process of progressive unification which was taking place elsewhere was here reversed, and by the end of the twelfth century Brabant had been broken up into five counties, while as far as the Seine were small and involved feudal domains and bishoprics, such as Hainault, Vermandois, Ponthièvre, Amiens, Reims, Coucy, Beauvais.

Flanders retained a certain unstable unity, and against this Philip Augustus of France set himself in his comprehensive policy of unification; after his first invasion Ferrand of Portugal, who had married the heiress of the last Baldwin of Flanders and Hainault, took the lead in forming an alliance with England and the Empire for the crushing of France and the division of the

kingdom. Bouvines saw the ending of the ambitious plot, and as well the beginnings of modern France. Later came the League of Grammont and the second attempt to destroy France, which failed also; but at the battle of Courtrai by the Lys, the Flemish army of 25,000 utterly defeated a French force of double the number, with the loss of the proudest blood in France. A thousand knights fell, with 20,000 squires and men-at-arms, and in the Church of Our Lady of Courtrai, 700 gold spurs, from the heels of dead knights, were hung to the glory of the great victory.

So through the thirteenth century incessant fighting went on both in Flanders and Brabant, and in the great bishopric of Liège, the net result being the complete downfall of feudalism in advance of the rest of Europe and the solidifying of the popular passion for personal liberty and self-government.

The fourteenth century was the golden age of the communes and as well of renewed resistance to the continuous encroachments of France, when the brief period of the commercial alliance with England under Edward III came to an end. This English alliance, prompted by both commercial and political considerations, had been

the dream of the first Van Artevelde, Jacques by name, the leader of the weavers of Ghent. For nine years he had laboured for the interests of his fellow guildsmen and Ghentois, supporting King Edward III in his claims on the crown of France, plotting and planning to preserve the independence of Flanders. He fell a victim, however, to the spirit of irresponsible faction which already had been the inevitable outcome of the democratic, socialistic, and selfishly greedy elements inherent in an unhampered guild system, and was murdered by his own followers in the streets of Ghent.

In the meantime Louis de Mâle, had become Count of Flanders, in succession to his father, Louis de Nevers, while Wenceslas of Luxembourg, son of the King of Bohemia, who had married one of the daughters of John III, became Duke of Brabant. Here, as in Flanders, the various guilds had gained a control that was periodically contested by the nobles, particularly in Louvain, where the disorders continued for twenty years. In the end the cities were defeated, for they had used their power ill, determining their action by superhuman cruelty and greed, oppressing the weaker communes whenever they threatened their

trade, fighting amongst themselves, splitting up into factions, and vacillating between sudden enthusiasms and corresponding treachery. Already the tendency was setting in away from the mediæval looseness, mobility, and even democracy in government, and toward that centralisation coupled with autocracy which was to be the contribution of the Renaissance to the science of government and was to end in the absolutism of Henry VIII, Philip of Spain, and Louis XIV. Even if the guilds had shown a high standard of morals and of statesmanship, if the communes had been truly patriotic and national in their aims and methods, they could hardly have stood against a tendency already clearly defined and marking the new era, now coming to birth, as their high beginnings had marked that already drawing to its close.

Louis made war against Brabant, lost, but regained Malines, which he had sold to his father-in-law of Brabant, and then turned his attention to a final suppression of Ghent, the last stronghold of the declining democracy of Flanders. It was in 1279 that Bruges asked for a canal to the Lys to make amends for the silting up of her only outlet to the sea. Ghent protested, fearing loss



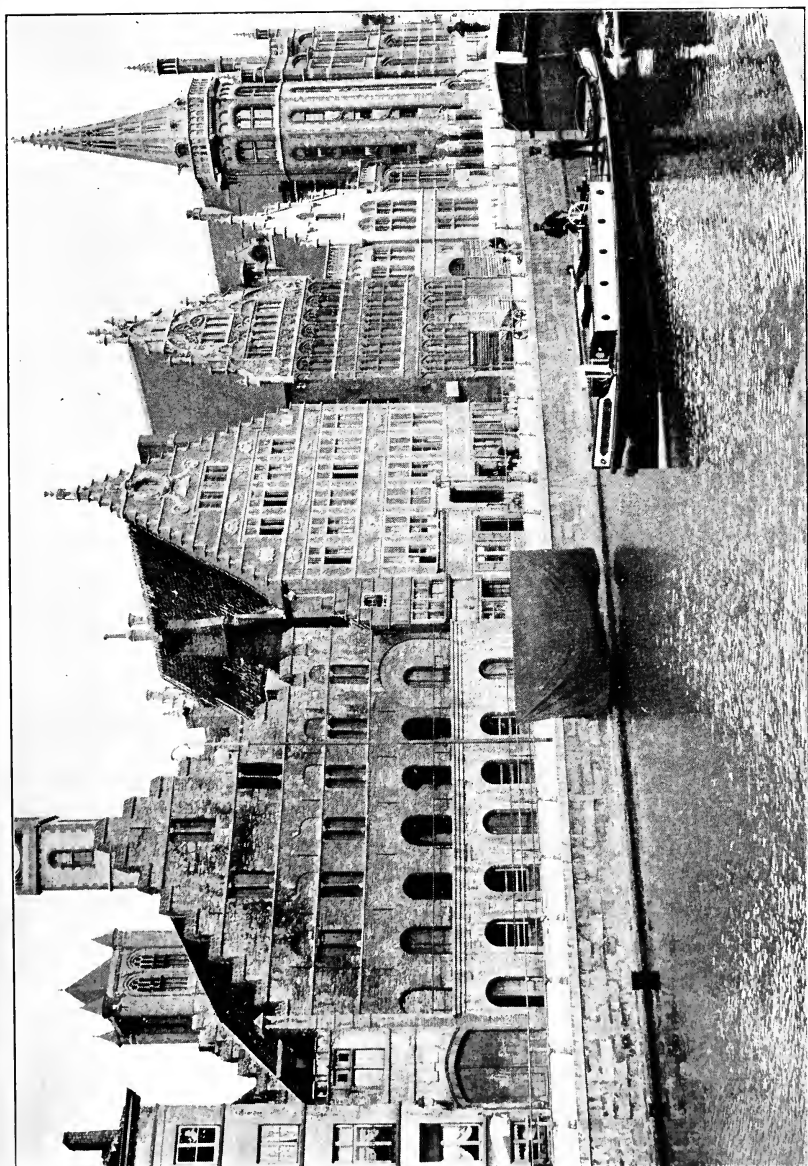
of her own trade, and took up arms when Louis granted the canal. The "White Hoods" defeated the forces sent against them, whereupon the fickle burgers of Bruges and Ypres went over to their side and long, hard fighting followed, until Louis found himself besieged in Audenaarde by some 60,000 "White Hoods" and was only saved by the intervention of his son-in-law Charles of Burgundy. Retreating to France, with headquarters at Lille, he reorganised his forces, renewed the attack, captured Ypres, and, one after the other, all the cities of Flanders except Ghent, to which he laid siege. At this last crisis in its fortunes Ghent turned to Philip, son of Jacques van Artevelde, who took command, organised a force of 5,000 men, led them against Count Louis' army of 40,000, attacked near Bruges, and defeated it utterly, Louis escaping only in the clothes of his servant. Bruges was occupied and its walls destroyed, Ypres and Courtrai joined in with Ghent, and Bruges itself turned against its count.

The issue was now fairly joined between commons and knights; Louis de Mâle made his cause that of order and the nobility against anarchy and the proletariat, the King of France and the Duke of Burgundy joined him, and under Oliver,

constable of France, 80,000 men, amongst whom no communal levies were admitted, marched on Ghent and its allies. Against this force Philip van Artevelde mustered 40,000 men who advanced to the attack with a mad confidence born of their recent victory over Louis. In a thick fog they hurled themselves in a solid body on the centre of the enemy, broke it, saw victory before them, and then, the fog lifting, found themselves flanked on both sides by the constable's horse, and abandoned themselves to a panic that ended in the slaughter of more than half their number, including Van Artevelde himself, whose brief day of success and glory had lasted exactly eleven months.

The French sacked Courtrai and went home, whereupon Ghent again took heart of hope, and, aided by Henry Spencer, Bishop of Norwich, with 3,000 men, defied Louis and laid siege to Ypres, which was relieved by the returning French, and a truce was finally signed at Calais.

It was the end of the democratic communes, not only in Flanders but in Brabant, where Duke Wenceslas at the same time had defeated the communes at Louvain, and as well in France, where the growing spirit of communal inde-



THE QUAI AUX HERBES, GHENT



pendence was wiped out by a king who had found in Flanders the proof that this cannot co-exist with a strong and centralised monarchy.

Already industrial decline had set in; the country had been harried by French armies and by civil wars, many had gone overseas to England to establish there a rival industry that slowly sapped the prosperity of Flanders and Brabant. The Black Death had decimated the remaining population, and Bruges, Courtrai, Ypres, indeed nearly all the great towns but Ghent, slowly lost their population until hardly a tenth was left. Still a large degree of prosperity remained, and wealth was as much desired and as successfully attained as before, only within narrower lines and by a far smaller number of people.

When Louis de Mâle died, shortly after the victory of his French allies over the communes, his son-in-law, Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, became Count of Flanders, and the fifteenth century was dominated by Burgundian efforts to build up a strong central kingdom when it became evident that it could not control the destinies of France. Flanders, Brabant, and Namur were all incorporated in Burgundy, and later Holland and Hainault, so that it seemed for a

time that a great central state might arise between the Empire and the kingdom of France.

Philip's first efforts were to wean Flanders from its friendship with England in order that he might use the country for the invasion he had planned to bring about. He died in 1404 before he could carry out his schemes and was succeeded by his son, John the Fearless, whose aim was the French crown, in opposition to the Duke of Orleans who had become supreme in Paris. He marched on the capital, which opened its gates to him, while Orleans took refuge in the south but returned and too confidently patched up some kind of a peace with Burgundy, who had him assassinated in the streets of Paris in the following year. Out of his murder grew the league of the partisans of Orleans, the "Armagnacs," who took their name from Count d'Armagnac, father-in-law of one of the daughters of the murdered duke, and the warfare between them and the house of Burgundy.

In the meantime Henry V had laid claim to the French throne, had invaded France, and fought the battle of Agincourt. Thus far John the Fearless had kept out of the fight, but now he allied himself with the Dauphin and went to

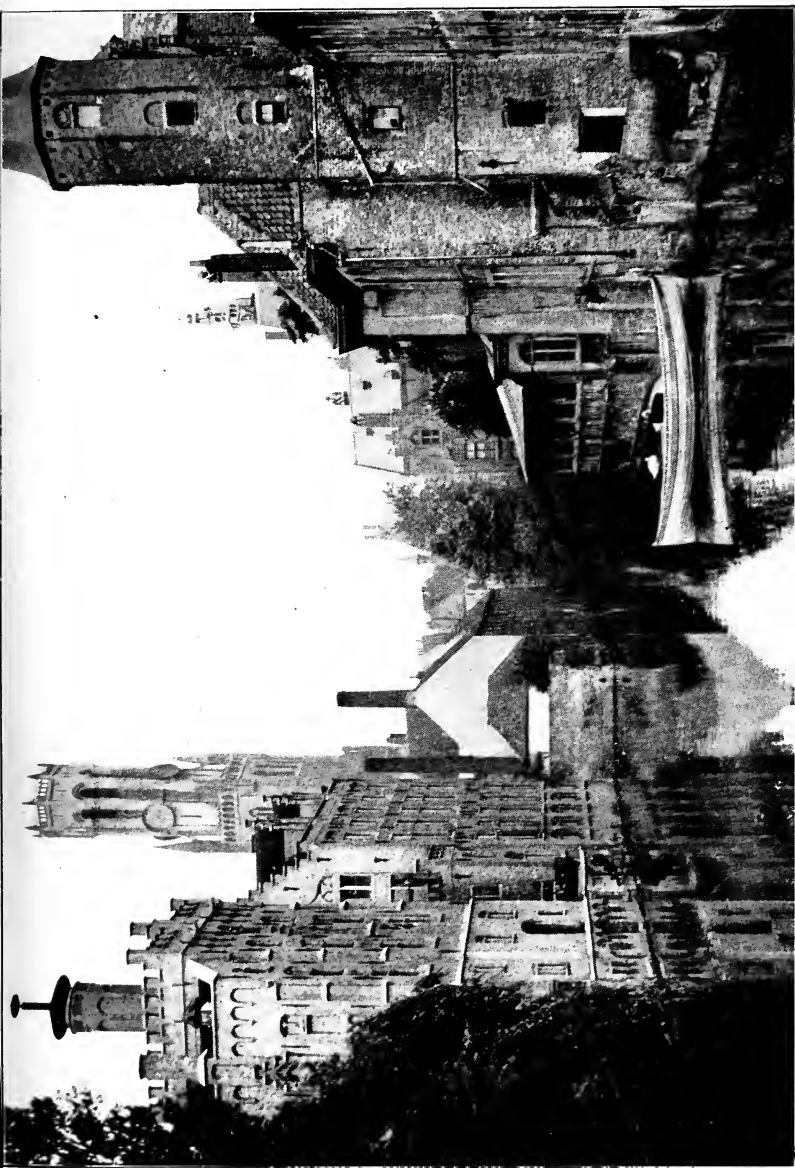
meet him at Montereau to seal his allegiance. Here he was in turn slain by the Armagnacs in revenge for his own murder of the Duke of Orleans, and his son, Philip the Good, at once threw himself into the arms of England, against France, and it was he who handed over the B. Jeanne d'Arc to the Bishop of Beauvais, after her capture at Compiègne in 1430, as a witch and sorceress.

Philip was more devoted to his new possessions than to his native Burgundy, and under him Bruges and Ghent took precedence of his old capital of Dijon. Philip also was the founder of the Order of the Golden Fleece on the occasion of one of his numerous marriages, this time in Bruges and to the Countess of Nevers. The marriage was a great event in many ways, for to it came the Duke and Duchess of Bedford, he being then Regent of France for the English king and realising that the triumphant career of Jeanne d'Arc was having results that urged him to make the most of the Duke of Burgundy, the only friend left to his royal master. The Golden Fleece, the oldest order on the Continent, was instituted in particular honour of Flanders, and especially the city of Bruges, the world centre of

the wool trade. There were to be but twenty-four knights, under the leadership of the duke, and they were granted extraordinary privileges, amongst them immunity from all other states, princes and laws, being subject only to their sovereign master, though they remained citizens of their respective states, whatever those may have been. Philip II of Spain did away with this intolerable anomaly, and in 1725 the order was divided between Spain and Austria, so losing wholly its original and most distinctive quality as a signal honour especially pertaining to Flanders.

By 1435 Philip, whose affection for England had been at the best lukewarm, could bear no longer the appalling misery of France and the excesses of the English armies. All north of the Loire had become a wilderness and even in the later Middle Ages pity was a feeling still easily aroused. By the treaty of Arras Burgundy finally separated itself from the English alliance and joined Charles VII, the immediate result being a letting-up of the war in France and a transferring of hostilities to Flanders. The duke led an enthusiastic force of Flemings against Calais, failed to capture it, and then discovered





BRUGES, FROM THE QUAI DU ROSAIRE



the erratic nature of his Flemish subjects, for they forthwith turned against him as suddenly as they had deserted the English alliance, and Philip proceeded forthwith to break their spirit, or rather the frantic independence of their cities. He succeeded, and yet Flanders prospered in spite of the sporadic internecine warfare. Prosperity somehow came back and wealth increased, while Memling, the Van Eycks and their great line of successors, together with other masters of art in allied fields, gave a glory to the time that will endure for ever. Then followed years of strife and turbulence, of shifting alliances and of sympathies as ready to turn as to be aroused. Philip died, was succeeded by his son, Charles the Bold, and the disorders broke out afresh so successfully that at first he was forced to give back all the communal privileges his father had taken away. In addition to his domestic troubles he found himself the object of the serpentine plots of Louis XI now King of France. Charles was equal to the occasion, however; he married Margaret of York, sister to the English King, so acquiring a new ally; marched against Liège, the centre of the local disaffection, captured it triumphantly, then turned on the crafty and unscrupu-

lous Louis and proceeded to beat him at his own game. In the midst of this enviable adventure, Liège revolted once more, and this time Charles, dragging Louis at his heels, captured the city again, now showing none of the mercy he had before exhibited. The whole city was sacked, only the churches and monasteries being spared, and the ruins were given to the flames. In spite of the exemption accorded religious property, the destruction of the great city was too manifestly a violation of the common decencies of Christian conduct to be neutrally endured by the Pope, who at that time (it was almost five centuries ago) did not fear to take a strong stand for righteousness when occasion offered, and Charles had to make his peace with the head of the Church as best he could.

The policy of "frightfulness" had its advantages to its perpetrator, however, and the other rebellious cities surrendered at discretion, losing their treasured liberties and becoming simply communities in a united and centralised state. In the end Charles lost, for Louis XI was a schemer of such profound duplicity that only the devil himself could have matched him in the long run, and on even terms. The duke met failure at

every turn: in his effort to co-ordinate his unruly provinces into a working organism, in his ambition to become King of Burgundy instead of duke, in his last war against the Swiss when he was utterly defeated and slain. He was succeeded by his daughter, the famous Mary of Burgundy, who also became a victim of the royal spider of France, but countered on him by suddenly marrying Maximilian, son of the Emperor, and so beginning that train of events that severed Burgundy from its French associations and brought its several parts into a relationship with Germany that continued for nearly three centuries.

Young, beautiful, clever, and immensely popular, Mary of Burgundy seemed destined to accomplish what her father had failed to bring about, the unification and restoration of a great Burgundian state, but after only five years of rule she was killed by a fall from her horse while hunting, and Philip, her infant son, became duke in name, and the old political troubles rose to a climax that in the end brought in the Spanish dominion and the ruin that followed in its wake.

The cities of Flanders and Brabant turned again to France, in a frantic effort to regain their lost liberties, while Maximilian, who had been

crowned King of Rome, and was of course next in succession to the Empire, fought again and again to restore his supremacy, and regain his infant son, the future Philip the Fair, who had been sent to France to be educated and to get him out of the hands of his father. In the end he defeated the ring-leading cities, Ghent, Bruges, and Ypres, and was acknowledged regent. In 1493 Frederick died and Maximilian succeeded him as Emperor, proclaiming Philip as Count of Flanders, marrying him out of hand to Joanna, Infanta of Castile, and betrothing his sister to Don John, heir to the crown of Spain. The sudden rise of a great new power in the Iberian Peninsula had overturned all the old alignments; the driving of the Moors from Spain and the union of Aragon and Castile in Ferdinand and Isabella had revealed a new force that might be used against France, and more dependable than England, and the new Emperor was not slow to recognise his opportunity. His sister never married Don John, who died before the projected wedding, and was followed by his sister, the Queen of Portugal, so suddenly the Count of Flanders and his countess became heirs to the throne of Spain. They gained little advantage

from this, although after the death of Queen Isabella in 1505 they went to Spain, and were proclaimed as king and queen, but their glory was short-lived, for in the following year Philip met a sudden and untimely end, his queen went mad through grief, and the Emperor became the dominating influence in Spain as well as in Flanders through the guardianship of his five-year-old grandson, the future Charles V.

During his minority his aunt, Margaret of Austria, had acted as regent, and with a wisdom and a benevolence her male predecessors had never shown, so that when in 1515 Charles became actual ruler of Flanders, he found himself in possession of a calm and contented community. Carefully educated by his admirable aunt, Charles, the heir to seventeen kingdoms, could speak the language of each, and he had, moreover, the enormous advantage of being tutored by the great Erasmus of Rotterdam. Hardly had he become King of Spain through the death of Ferdinand, when his grandfather died, and he became Emperor as well. Practically all Europe, and America also, were his, and after his war with France which ended at Pavia with the capture of Francis I (when all was "lost save honour"),

he was the temporal Lord of the World, except England alone, while the spiritual power of the Papacy was his only rival on the Continent, and the Pope himself was his old tutor, Adrian, Archbishop of Toledo.

Charles was as able as he was universal in his sovereignty; he organised his vast empire on practical lines under well-chosen regents, none of whom was more excellent than Margaret of Austria, under whom the country prospered exceedingly. She was as shrewd and far-seeing as she was admirable in character; a poet in her own right, she fostered art, letters, and general culture, and her death in 1530 was a loss to Flanders and also to the Emperor, who immediately appointed his sister Mary regent in her place, a lady of less distinguished abilities, but a good and faithful servant for a quarter of a century.

Charles V estimated Luther, and the Reformation generally, at something of their true value; he saw the menace as well as the merit of the budding revolution and opposed it firmly because of its dangerous elements, which were already revealing themselves. The great era of the Middle Ages had come to an end, carrying with it in its fall many of those elements of righteousness in



thought and action for which Charles cared almost passionately. He was of the older age rather than of the new, and in the end the conviction that he had failed to stem the tide, coupled with the progressive ruin of the old religion, the old philosophy, the old order of life, led him to abdicate what was almost the throne of the world and seek refuge in a monastery, where he devoted the brief remainder of his life to prayer, meditation, and the making of watches.

In the meantime, however, he had done Europe inestimable services, amongst them the beating back of the Moslem host, the recovery to Christianity of Hungary, the conquest of Tunis, and the general blocking of the double lines of Mohammedan advance. He was successful in his new crusade against the Eastern infidels, but he could not arrest the progress of heresy and anarchy in the West, and he finally abandoned the fight in despair, turning over to others a royalty too heavy to be borne. To his son Philip were given Spain, the American possessions, and the "Low Countries," which then comprised all Belgium, Holland, and Luxembourg as well as Artois and Cambrai. So began the Spanish dominion over the very centre of the Heart of Eu-

rope. It was the richest state in the world; when Philip II became sovereign there were seventeen provinces with 208 great walled towns, 150 boroughs and more than 6,000 villages. The products were infinitely varied and were famous throughout the world: woollen cloth, linen, silk, velvet, damask, embroideries, gloves, metal-work of every kind. Antwerp was in the lead in commerce, and it is said that the city had a population of 250,000, with 1,000 resident foreign merchants; 500 ships entered the port daily, and 300 wagons from across the frontiers of France and the Empire, while more business was transacted there in a week than in two years in Venice, her great commercial rival in the South. Such were the lands that came to Philip of Spain: the richest prize that Europe could afford.

## IV

### A SPANISH NETHERLANDS

WHEN Philip II came to the throne there was a new king in France, Henry II, who forthwith broke the peace Charles V had engineered, and proceeded to invade both Italy and Flanders. He was promptly beaten, in the north by Egmont at St. Quentin, and after so disastrous a fashion that hardly any one but Nevers and Condé escaped. It was in gratitude for the brilliant victory of his Belgian troops that Philip built the palace of the Escorial. Trying again the next year, Henry did indeed, through the Duke de Guise (whose luck was better than that which followed him when he met Alva the year before in Italy), regain Calais, during the absence of the English garrison, who were home on a holiday; but again Egmont came into the breech, crushed the French at Gravelines, and so forced the treaty of Câteau-Cambrésis, which obliged France, amongst other penalties, to give up to Philip more than two hundred walled

towns, though she was allowed to retain Calais, Mary of England now being dead.

Flemish soldiers, now forming the best trained and most effective army in Europe, had won the war for Philip, but out of the victory came in the end the ruin of their country, for before leaving for Spain, which he loved, he demanded of the Netherlands, which he disliked, three million florins toward the expense of the war. This was granted, but coupled with a request that the Spanish garrison be withdrawn. It happened that this demand was made at the instigation of William, Prince of Orange, who now appears on the scene, for he had discovered that Henry and Philip had secretly agreed to stamp out Protestantism in the Low Countries by introducing the Spanish Inquisition, and that the alien garrison was to be the means of putting this plan into effect. William of Orange was not a Fleming but a German; he had expected to be made regent when the King went back to Spain, and had been disappointed. He was neither a Catholic nor a Protestant, but a cold, silent, far-seeing politician of extremely rationalistic views. He knew that the spirit of independence in the Netherlands was so dominating that Catholics

and Protestants alike could be allied against both the Inquisition and a foreign garrison. He cleverly united them on this basis, alienated the last flicker of friendly feeling on the part of Philip, and so precipitated the conflict that raged for almost a century to the ruin and misery of all the seventeen provinces. Philip appeared to yield, went back to Spain, and at once began his scheming for the destruction of the Protestant heresy in his too-independent territories.

So far as the aristocracy, the rich burghers, and the cultivated classes were concerned, Protestantism had made little if any headway in spite of the wide corruption of the Church, but among the peasants and the ignorant, particularly in the great cities, it had taken firm hold. To Philip it was both a damnable heresy and a civil menace; he hated it as his father had hated it, but Charles V was of a different mould and temper. Philip was a Spanish Catholic, and therein (at that time) lay all the difference. To him with his cold mind and pitiless temper there was only one question: how to root out this accursed and poisonous growth. The answer was at hand in the shape of the peculiar type of inquisition which had been invented in Spain for the sole purpose

of completing the expulsion of the Moors and Jews from the Peninsula after the final defeat of the Mohammedan invaders. It had proved its efficiency to admiration, and, though it had never been used against Christian heretics, Philip felt (as others have felt after him) that both the righteous State and the Catholic Church were, through the King, fighting for their lives, and that he had no right to balk at any means that offered when it was a question of life or death.

The old "Papal" Inquisition, which came into existence toward the end of the Middle Ages, and was the corollary of the dawning spirit of the Renaissance with which it synchronised, was legitimate enough, if you hold, as every one held then, that spiritual evil is as wicked as material evil, and just as worthy of formal punishment. Trials were conducted according to civil law, they were public, and the secular arm alone inflicted punishment. The "Spanish" Inquisition, which is the form so bitterly condemned to-day, was a creature of the Renaissance in its fulness. It was an engine of the most diabolical efficiency, for its proceedings were secret, its finding irrevocable, its penalties merciless and as cruel as English criminal law in the seventeenth and

eighteenth centuries, though it lacked certain of the refinements of torture that were first developed under "Good King Hal" when he was waging his war against the monks and monasteries of his own England.

Had Philip been dealing with the Popes of the Middle Ages, he could never have imposed the Spanish Inquisition on the Netherlands, but those of the Renaissance were as different as possible, and he had no trouble in gaining their consent. A few burnings took place, and then the loyal and Catholic but intensely patriotic nobles took matters into their own hands and through the regent, Margaret of Parma, warned the King that unless the thing was stopped the provinces would act in defence of their own rights and in accordance with their solemnly guaranteed privileges. The Protestant mob also began to act after its own fashion, without waiting for an answer from Philip, and week after week carried on a course of destruction that wrecked cathedrals, monasteries, churches, and destroyed more old stained glass, wonderful statues, great pictures, jewelled vestments, and sacred vessels than have escaped to this day. The senseless and sacrilegious fury of this mob of the baser sort not only lashed the

King into a cold fury but it even halted some of the Catholic nobles, many of whom, including Egmont himself, began to wonder if, after all, the Inquisition was not permissible in the light of the revelations that were being made in the desecrated churches of Antwerp and Ghent and Tournai. No advantage was taken of this changing sentiment, however, and, ready at last, Philip struck, and the Duke of Alva, with an army of 10,000 picked men, marched up from Genoa, occupied Brussels, seized every disaffected leader, including even those like Egmont and Horn, who were both loyal and devout Catholics (but barring Orange, who had cautiously retreated to Germany), and established the "Council of Blood," which during the first week of its activities executed more than eight hundred men whose only crime was protesting against the denial of their guaranteed liberties and the maintenance of the Inquisition.

The Prince of Orange organised in Germany a small armed force for the deliverance of the cowed and horrified Netherlanders, but his first victory over Alva's forces was answered by immediate reprisals in Brussels, a score of nobles being sent to the block, including Horn and Eg-





*From a photograph by Hanfstaengl*

THE DUKE OF ALVA, MORO VAN DASHORST



mont, the latter being the most honoured of the nobles and as good a Catholic as he was a soldier. The people remained absolutely crushed, making no effort to rise in support of the Prince of Orange, who, defeated by Alva, sought the aid of the French Protestants, attacked from the sea by means of privateers who preyed on Spanish commerce, and finally, by establishing a base in Holland, raised this portion of the Spanish Netherlands against Alva and made himself actual head of a new state. In the meantime a Huguenot army had laid siege to Mons, but just as victory seemed near the Massacre of St. Bartholomew ended the Protestant party in France for ever, destroyed all the hopes that had been raised through the possibility of assistance from Coligny, and sent Orange back again behind the Rhine, leaving Flanders and Brabant to their fate. Alva saw to it that this was sufficiently awful, and then began operations against Holland, but by this time Philip had become thoroughly tired of the costly war and listened willingly to the enemies of the terrible duke, recalled him, and sent in his place the comparatively mild and accommodating Requesens.

The tale is now one of progressive and finally

successful efforts at pacifying the country, the undoing so far as possible of the bloody work of Alva, the winning back to the Church and to the Spanish crown of all those who had not gone over definitely to Protestantism and the Prince of Orange. Both the Pope and the King offered full amnesty, and the southern provinces, those, that is, that now form the kingdom of Belgium, accepted at once and completely, for after all they were solidly Catholic and in principle not averse to Spanish dominion. The northern provinces—*i. e.*, Holland—rejected all overtures, binding themselves completely, implacably, and savagely to Protestantism, and from now on the former Spanish Netherlands became two states: Holland, soon to win its independence, and Belgium, now and for a long time to come, a Spanish province.

Order was still far away. It was in the year 1573 that Requesens came to reverse the policy of Alva, and not until the Peace of Utrecht in 1715, when Spanish rule was finally terminated, that there was any rest or relief for the tortured and ruined provinces of Flanders and Brabant. Requesens died; the Spanish troops mutinied, were joined by the German mercenaries, and began a

war on their own account, burning and sacking Antwerp, butchering 6,000 of the population, and harrying the country right and left. Then came Don John of Austria, Philip's new governor-general, the victor of Lepanto, and a figure out of the pages of mediæval romance. He came too late; anarchy was firmly fixed in the saddle, riding rough-shod over the desolated garden of Europe. Abandoning his original policy of pacification, he turned to war and was successful, but only to find about every power in Europe represented in the roaring inferno. Orange was fighting from Antwerp as his headquarters, the provincial representatives, with Brussels as their centre, were howling for help from any source; the Protestant faction called John Casimir, Count Palatine, to their assistance, while the Catholics appealed to the Duke d'Alençon, and both put in an appearance, the latter seizing Maubeuge and working thence into the interior, while the former defeated Don John in a pitched battle and drove him back to Namur, where in a few months he died of chagrin and a broken heart, after making his nephew Alexander Farnese, Prince of Parma, his successor in the field.

Hell is the only name that can be applied to

the unhappy land, the condition of which was not unlike that of Mexico in this year of enlightenment, 1915. The Renaissance and the Reformation together had extinguished both civilisation and culture over the greater part of Europe; war was everywhere and incessant, all principle had been abandoned and the ethical standards of society had disappeared. Slaughter, civil war, assassination, treason, and sacrilege howled through an ever-widening desolation and the end of the world seemed at hand. Fortunately, in a way, the outrageous career of the Protestants served as an impulse to union; their savagery in Ghent and Brussels somehow pulled the people of Belgium together and enabled Parma to win some small order out of the insane chaos. He began a new campaign, drove out the French, laid siege to the Calvinists in Ghent, and at last (the Prince of Orange having been assassinated at the instigation of Philip) broke down the last Protestant resistance in Brussels and Antwerp and for the moment restored peace over a deserted, ruined, and blood-stained land. And then Philip II died and dying abandoned the country he had received as the richest in Europe and left as the most miserable and poverty-stricken,

handing it over to new rulers in the persons of his daughter Isabella and her husband, the Archduke Albert of Austria.

The great and happy and wealthy state created by the House of Burgundy had been utterly destroyed and irretrievably ruined. A new Protestant state had been formed from one fragment in the north, other portions were shortly to be incorporated in France, and the nine provinces that still remained out of the original seventeen were hardly more than a geographical abstraction. Half the great cities had been sacked and burned, the craftsmen and artisans were slaughtered or in exile, the cold and greedy Hollanders had seized (and were to retain by force or fraud) the vast commerce that once was the possession of Flanders and Brabant, agriculture had ceased, famine was universal, religion and mercy and education were memories, while the old civic spirit and the old freedom and independence were things of so long ago they were not even remembered.

To do them justice, the new sovereigns meant well by the exhausted country, but first of all they had set their hearts on the crushing of the Protestant Netherlands, and nine years of war

set in which ended at last with the complete victory of the Dutch republic and its acknowledged independence. Then came the anomaly of twelve years of peace with the astonishing outburst of a genuine and brilliant if evanescent culture. Peace is a good foundation for industry, trade, and commerce, but the fact is unavoidable that the black ploughing and the red fertilising of a land by war frequently bring a luxuriant crop of those cultural products that have issue in character as they follow from it. Here in Flanders the years between the Peace of Antwerp in 1609 and the restoration of Spanish rule on the death of Albert in 1624, were opulent with all manner of civic and personal wealth in those lines that are cultural rather than material. It was a time of the restoration of religion through new monastic foundations, of the establishing of houses of mercy, of the building up of great universities, of the development of printing, of the production of great scientists and scholars, of a new era of painting. The University of Louvain dates from this time, the great printing-house of the Plantins and the Moretus, the art of Rubens and Vandyck.

It was all temporary, however, and ephemeral.



Spain took charge once more, the Dutch continued their policy of commercial and religious aggression, the Thirty Years' War drew the unfortunate provinces into its whirlpool; the war between France and Spain was largely fought on their territory, the war of France against the United Netherlands resulted in the seizure by the unsuccessful party—France—of Belgian territory as a salve to its wounded pride. Year after year Belgium was subject to renewed devastations; what the Protestants and Spaniards had left the French despoiled. Brussels, which had now become the richest and most splendid of the cities, was bombarded with red-hot cannon balls and almost wholly destroyed, sixteen churches and four thousand houses being burned, and the great city deprived of almost its last examples of the great art of the Middle Ages.

And so the wretched tale goes on, generation after generation. God alone knows how or why anything was left in Belgium, either of art or culture or character or religion, or even of the rudiments of civilisation. Still something did remain for destruction, as was proved a little later by the revolutionists of France and recently by the Prussians, both of whom have performed the

final work quite perfectly. The Heart of Europe had been torn, lacerated, crushed, for one hundred and sixty years, and yet somehow it continued to beat on. A great Christian culture, a great congeries of Christian peoples, product of the splendid centuries from 1000 to 1500 A. D., had been destroyed and superseded by the very different force engendered by Renaissance and Reformation. If there are those who still, despite the blazing enlightenment of the last twelve-month, retain any illusions as to the comparative beneficence of the two epochs, it would be well for them to consider in detail the annals and the peoples and the personalities of the Heart of Europe during the five centuries of mediævalism, and the same during the five centuries of the Renaissance and the Reformation. The contrast is striking, the revision of judgments unescapable, the lesson, immediately to be applied in the present crisis, pregnant of possible benefits.

With the Peace of Utrecht all that is now Belgium passed to the Emperor Charles VI, and Austrian dominion began. In contrast to the preceding horrors it was comparatively uneventful; while Prince Charles of Lorraine was governor the country was quiet and prosperous and a cer-

tain advance occurred on cultural lines. This enlightened prince deserves well of history in one respect at least, for, by an imperial decree he caused to be issued, it was solemnly asserted that a gentleman did not lose his status as such if he indulged in the practice of the arts or letters! Joseph II, who followed him, was a pedantic reformer of laudable intentions, who set himself to the perfecting of everything, both religious and secular, to the extreme irritation of his people who simply wanted to govern themselves and apparently cared little whether this were well done or ill. In the end the whole country broke up again in rebellion and disorder, the nobles leagued in one group under the Duke d'Arenberg, the lower classes in a second with a vulgar and noisy demagogue, Van der Noot, as its leader. Somehow or other they managed to get together at Breda, raised an army, defeated the Austrian garrisons, and drove the Emperor Joseph across the Meuse when he forthwith died of sheer discouragement.

Then followed a short-lived "republic" engineered by Van der Noot, who was an adherent of the new French ideas, with an attack on the nobles which was sufficiently successful to bring

their party to an end. Next, the powers who looked most askance at the fast-growing revolution—England, Holland, and Prussia—united for the restoration of Austrian authority, on general principles, and the Emperor Leopold II, with their support, asserted, and then established his authority, capturing Namur and within two weeks occupying the whole country (which accepted him contentedly enough), driving the ambitious advocate with the revolutionary tendencies into a well-merited exile. Austria tried honestly enough to conciliate the country, but its temper and inclinations were otherwise, so France was asked to intervene, which she was not loath to do, sending Doumouriez to undertake the task. Badly beaten at first, he succeeded finally at Valmy and Jemappes, and the French Revolution assumed control. The cabal of assassins then in power in Paris decreed that Belgium should be saved, but that first she must be purged, and a choice assortment of thirty ruffians was sent to Brussels to see that this was done. A guillotine was set up at once, and clerics, nobles, and the wealthier merchants became its victims, while the patriot army, supported by the local revolutionists, acted after their kind and sacked the

remaining churches, destroyed religious houses, and generally plundered whatever they safely could, *i. e.*, whatever was unable to defend itself. Doumouriez countenanced none of this, but he was playing a double game, acting ostensibly for the cabal in Paris though with the idea always before him that if he could control Belgium and conquer Holland he would be in a good position from which to turn on his employers, crush them, and then restore the monarchy on constitutional lines. Unfortunately for his plans, he was defeated by the allies and again Austria won back her insecure provinces. She was received with the facile enthusiasm which now seemed chronic with the shattered Belgian character, but after a few months was driven out for the last time when France was finally victorious over the half-hearted, selfish, and ineffectual allies, only one of whom, England, was waging war against the republic with anything approaching sincerity and determination.

Again the French—or rather the republican faction—entered into possession, and unhappy Belgium felt the full force of its grinning hypocrisy, its satanic savagery, and its unscrupulous greed. “Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity” was

painted on the walls, and simultaneously the country was robbed of its last coins, its laws and privileges were overthrown, its citizens deprived of even the most fundamental rights of liberty and property, while the few remaining abbeys and castles were sacked, burned, and their ruins razed to the ground. Alva had been an amateur compared with the new apostles of liberty, and when at last Belgium was declared regenerate and was incorporated in the French "republic," nothing remained for incorporation except a name, a memory, and a huddle of entirely ruined and perfectly hopeless victims of four centuries of cumulative enlightenment and progress.

Of course they rebelled; of course whole groups of desperate men took to the forests and moors, robbing, killing, existing as best they could, and of course they were crushed again and again; at last, however, Bonaparte began to bring some order out of the republican anarchy, and conditions improved. When at last he proclaimed himself Emperor the Belgians accepted him with the same avidity they always had shown for any man who promised some alleviation of their intolerable sufferings. Holland was occupied and given a king of its own, Napoleon's brother Louis,

who was not only the strongest and finest character in the family, but so righteous in his kingship and so whole-heartedly devoted to his Dutch that he soon alienated the sympathies of his imperial brother while failing to gain those of his somewhat difficult subjects.

The dream empire began to dissolve; Holland revolted, and the Prince of Orange was restored; Belgium was occupied by the Allies, who had got to work again, and the scheme of a new state, to be formed of all the old seventeen provinces united under the Prince of Orange, was brought forward against the wishes of the Belgians, who preferred the restoration of Austrian rule. They had lived too close to their Protestant Dutch neighbours and had too keen a memory of their character and habits to desire amalgamation with them on any terms.

Napoleon went to Elba, came back, called on his "loyal Belgians" to support him, advanced into their territories, and at Waterloo lost everything and melted away into history and legend, leaving Belgium in unnatural union with the Dutch provinces, where it remained for some fifteen years, revolting in 1830, making good its rebellion, and establishing itself as an indepen-

dent state under the sovereignty of Prince Leopold of Saxe-Cobourg, who had been elected King on the refusal of the Duc de Nemours, first chosen by the victorious provisional government.

The long agony was at an end; it had lasted from August 22, 1567, when the Duke of Alva entered Brussels, until July 21, 1831, when Leopold I was crowned King of Belgium, a period of two hundred and sixty-four years. Other peoples and other states have been brought low, time out of mind; have suffered, disintegrated, and disappeared. It would be hard to find another instance, however, where so fabulously rich a people, and so cultivated withal, so supreme in their achievement of a lofty and well-rounded civilisation, have been called upon to submit to so prolonged, varied, and searching an assault, to descend to such depths of misery, poverty, and degradation—and who yet have preserved through two centuries and a half of agony and spoliation a tradition and a habit of righteousness that, when the great test arrived, blazed upward in sudden fierceness of self-revelation to the confusion of new enemies and the wonder of a world. What lies beyond awaits the proof, but for the moment three centuries have dropped away and the old inde-



pendence, the old fearlessness, the old honour of Bruges and Ghent, of Liége and Malines shine again on old battle-fields of new carnage and in new hearts of old righteousness. The new era begins, and the world waits, confident of the issue.

## V

### THE GLORY OF A GREAT ART

**B**ETWEEN Paris and Cologne, Strasbourg and Bruges lies, in little, nearly the whole history of northern architecture from Charlemagne to the last Louis of France, when it ceased to be an art and became a fashion. The greater part of Normandy lies, it is true, across the Seine, and is, for the time, beyond our field of vision, but, barring Caen, architectural significance is well concentrated in the triangle, Rouen, Dieppe, le Havre. The same is true of the old Royaume of France; though Chartres and Bourges lie to the south, the beginning, and in some sense the culmination, of Gothic is to be found between Seine and Somme. In the east, to the Rhine, we have practically all that Germany has contributed, except in the later days of the Renaissance.

If we like, we may go far beyond the dim and mysterious era of the Carolings, finding in Trèves old Roman ruins that take us back four or five centuries earlier, but the real history of this region begins with Charlemagne and takes us to his fa-

yourite city of Aix-la-Chapelle for the single, but vastly significant, building left us as evidence of his inspiration and his creative power. With the ending of this day-dream there comes a great silence, while civilisation and culture disappear again, to be restored two centuries later, far to the west, and at the hands of the Normans. Here we find St. Georges de Bocherville, Fécamp, and the inestimable and forgotten ruins of Jumièges. For transition to Gothic we have Senlis, Soissons, Noyon, with Laon and Paris as earliest Gothic of pure and consistent type; Châlons, Amiens, and Reims for culmination, and Abbeville, Rouen, Beauvais, Troyes, and Strasbourg for its sumptuous decline.

From the other hand we go on from Aix to Cologne for the fine eleventh-century work that took up the tale after the second Dark Ages that followed the ending of the empire of the Carolings, with more examples at Laach and in Hildesheim, which also are beyond our survey. A century later we get the consistent Teutonic art of Trèves, Mayence, Spires, and Worms, while the high Gothic of the noon of mediævalism is found at Cologne and Strasbourg, with the last rich fantasy of all, in the fourteenth and fifteenth cen-

turies, in Brussels and Antwerp and Malines, in Courtrai, Tournai, Namur, Louvain, Ghent, Ypres, and Bruges. For Renaissance we find all we need, and everywhere; churches, palaces, guild-halls, châteaux, dwellings, from the fanciful transition at Dieppe, Rouen, Gisors, to the sophisticated, well-conditioned, and perfectly artificial restored classic of Nancy.

As there is no other country in the north, of equal area, where history has been made so plenteously and of such varied quality, so it is with its art, and its architecture in particular, which marks the beginnings, the culmination, and the close of the three stylistic periods of Christian civilisation in the West—Carolingian, Norman, and Gothic—and through monuments singularly significant and equally notable in their perfection. It would be impossible to quote a tenth of them; there are a hundred at least, each of which demands (and many have received) a volume or more, but at least we can pick the most priceless, either for history or beauty, in a farewell that may be final for all, as already it is for such consummate and vanished masterpieces as the Cloth Hall at Ypres and the Cathedral of Reims.

Let us begin with Aix, just over the Belgian



JUMIÈGES



frontier, the "City of the Great King," where culture lightened again after the long night, and where, of all the churches and palaces of the Emperor, only one remains as evidence of what he did. The royal chapel has been built onto and over and around, but the original norm remains in the shape of that polygonal form with surrounding arcades that was a step in the development of the perfect Gothic chevet. To a great extent it is a replica of San Vitale in Ravenna, and may very well have been built by the descendants of those Roman craftsmen who, after the fall of the one-time capitol of the world, sought refuge either under Byzantine protection in Ravenna or on Lake Como, where the tradition is they carefully cherished the traditions and the esoteric mysteries of their art, perpetuating the slowly fading memory through secret lodges that, some held, were the progenitors of modern freemasonry.

When the possibilities of a new culture and a restored civilisation revealed themselves to the conqueror, who was also statesman, patriot, and (after his dim and flickering light) Christian, two centuries had left the West a wilderness, and all was to do over again. There were, it seemed,

neither scholars nor artists nor righteous leaders of any sort in the world, and the task must have appeared hopeless. Charlemagne, undaunted, sent east and west, from Britain to Spain, searching out those who, by report, rose above the hopeless level of barbarian mediocrity. Alcuin of Britain, Peter of Pisa, Theodulphus, Hincmar, Eriugena, Radbertus Maurus, gathered around him at Aix, forming a cultural centre, reforming the Church, building up schools, creating an art almost out of nothing.

There was little enough, though Rome had its basilicas of the time of Constantine—San Paolo, San Lorenzo, Santa Maria Maggiore; from the East, it is true, travellers brought back wondering stories of the splendour of Justinian's churches, with Hagia Sophia at the head; in Ravenna were the more modest monuments of the Exarchate—Sant' Apollinare in Classe, San Vitale—in Istria, at Parenzo and Grado, were churches showing some new elements probably provided by Lombard builders, and San Pietro, Toscanella stood like a miracle, novel, without forebears, a new version of an ancient theme. These are what we have left, and then there was more, for much has since been destroyed, but most of it lay far afield,



and in the north there was nothing. The work of co-ordination was well performed, however, and the succession was re-established; after the chapel at Aix, therefore, architectural development was continuous, if moderate, though any estimate must be dubious owing to the almost complete destruction of the monuments. We still have the apses of Sant' Ambrogio in Milan; San Donato, Zara, N. D. de la Couture of Le Mans, and Montier en Der, none of them particularly inspiring or inspired, and none with any hint of what was suddenly to happen at Jumièges in the eleventh century. That the latter building may not have been as amazing an innovation as it appears is indicated by fragments and foundations of the work that came between it and Charlemagne, as at St. Martin of Tours, where the Revolution has left us nothing but foundations indicative of a former superstructure that may well have been the connecting-link, and might have changed our entire estimate of the quality of the architecture of the second Dark Ages. As it is, this chapel at Aix stands not only first in the great recovery of the eighth century, but almost unique, with no successors for nearly three centuries.

When the true dawn begins to lighten the hills, it is in the west that its coming is foreshown, in that Duchy of Normandy, where in a century the fierce Vikings, who had been driven from the coast of Flanders in their forays from the Baltic, had become the finely tempered material out of which was to be forged, by the monks of Cluny, a Catholic civilisation that was to extend itself over all western Europe and endure for five centuries. Of the three great abbeys that were the centres from which radiated the great transforming force, Bec, Fécamp, and Jumièges, the two latter lie on our side of the Seine, with the third only ten miles on the other side, while St. Georges de Bocherville, intact except for its pestilential restoration, is of the same period, as is Cérisy le Forêt. Caen, with its two abbeys of the Conqueror, inestimable monuments of architectural history, is well to the west, with Evreux, Lisieux, Bayeux, and Mont St. Michel, but we have enough on the right bank to demonstrate the nature and the greatness of the work accomplished by Cluny and the Normans in a union cemented by a vital and crescent Christianity.

Jumièges stands first, in its forgotten loop of

the Seine, and is amazing, no less. But for its fine new fourteenth-century chevet, it was, at the time of the French Revolution, almost in its original state, but it was destroyed then, with Cluny, Avranches, St. Martin of Tours, and other priceless monuments, though by no means so completely. To-day its towering walls, rising above thick trees and greenery, are startlingly picturesque, but their great value lies in the revelation they make of what was possible in the earliest days of Christian recovery. The work was begun in 1040 and finished within twenty-five years, being followed immediately by the abbeys of Caen, as these were followed by St. Georges de Bocherville. The original plan was in each case about the same, the standard type, originally Latin, with Syrian, and probably Lombard and Carolingian, developments; cruciform, aisled both in nave and choir, the latter being of two bays only, with an apse, but no apsidal aisle and chapels as at Tours. The transepts are of two bays on either side the central tower, the end bays having galleries or tribunes, with a subordinate apse to the east, so forming, in the lower stage, small, low chapels. It is in the working upward from this plan that the significant developments ap-

pear, and both here and at Cérisy le Forêt, we find the order of round-arched arcade, high triforium of two arches under a containing arch, and a single clerestory window, Cérisy having as well an open clerestory arcade of three units. The system is clearly alternating, as in Lombardy and Tuscany, but there is no evidence that vaulting was ever contemplated; instead, I think it certain that great transverse arches on every other pier, supporting a wooden roof, were in mind, after the Syrian fashion, as it was later modified at San Miniato in Florence, a few years before, though these were certainly never built at Jumièges. The west front, with its tall, flanking towers, is of the Como type (query: Is the hand of the Comacine master visible here?), while all the vertical proportions are more lofty and aspiring than had ever been known before. As a matter of fact, given the chevet with its aisle and radiating chapels, which was already being worked out farther south by the simple process of halving the Syrian, Byzantine, Ravennese, and Carolingian polygonal church and attaching this to the simultaneously developed nave, and you have all the potency of the Gothic system, the high vault (sexpartite or quadripartite) with its flying

buttresses now to be worked out at Caen, giving the final structural element, while the expanding Catholic faith and the buoyant northern blood were woven together to have issue in that essentially mediæval character which was to transform the whole, infusing it with that peculiar spiritual quality which gave its distinctive character, through a new vision of beauty, to the art that had been evolved for the full expression of a Christian civilisation at last triumphant and supreme over a dead paganism.

After Cluny and Jumièges, Paris, Bourges, Chartres, and Reims are inevitable, and the working out of a great destiny is headlong and almost incredible. Jumièges was finished in 1066, the year of the Norman conquest of England; Reims was begun in 1212. Within a space of a century and a half the greatest architectural evolution in history had taken place, so echoing and voicing an equally unprecedented development in human character and culture. In 1066, hardly more than fifty years had passed since Christian society emerged from two centuries of barbarism; in 1212 it had mounted to the loftiest levels of human achievement, with a theology, a philosophy, and an art, whatever its form, with which

there had been nothing comparable in the past, with which the achievements that were to follow, as they now show themselves in the red light of a revealing war, seem only the insane wanderings of a disorganised horde.

The sequence of development is well worked out east of the Seine, and at the hands of the Franks of the "Royaume," now under the direction of the Cistercians, as a century before the Normans had been controlled by the Cluniacs. This constant revivification of monasticism during crescent periods of human growth is a very interesting phenomenon. Apparently monasticism, which has accompanied Christianity from its earliest beginning until to-day, is an essential portion of its working structure, and if you accept Christianity in fact, you cannot escape accepting the "religious life" in principle. It seems, however, that it is always in unstable equilibrium, prone to inevitable decadence, and no order lasts out three generations without losing its beneficent energy. When life is on its periodic upward curve, a reformation always occurs at the critical moment, and there is no loss of impetus; so the original Benedictinism which had served Charlemagne so well, but had sunk into worse than inaction, gave place in the eleventh century to the

great Cluniac reform, which in its turn was succeeded by the Cistercian reform, as this yielded after another hundred years to the reform of St. Dominic and St. Francis.

Now the Romanesque art of Toulouse, Aquitaine, and Burgundy, the Norman of Normandy and England, the Rhenish of Germany, were largely Benedictine of the Cluniac mode, and the style rapidly became inordinately sumptuous, costly, and magnificent, as at Arles, Toulouse, Poitiers, Glastonbury, Durham. It has been said of monastic movements: "First generation pious, second generation learned, third generation decadent." Certainly as the Benedictines in France went on to the twelfth century, their original austerity and fervour were relaxed, and their art became a thing of splendour as their wealth and learning and temporal power increased. The Cistercian movement of Robert of Molesme and Stephen Harding and Bernard of Clairvaux was a revolt against luxury and laxity, an attempt (as ever) to get back to the supposititious simplicity of earlier times, and in the success that followed architecture changed completely, though the ending of the new style, and even its consummation, were different indeed from what the Cistercian reforms had desired.

In its beginnings Gothic architecture was an attempt at economy, the trying for something less massive and ornate than the great Benedictine piles of inert masonry. By cleverly developing a system of balanced thrusts, the sheer bulk of masonry was reduced by half, while attention was drawn away from the fast-increasing ornamentation to the shell itself, whereby a great gain was effected, and architecture became once more a study in organism, in composition, and in proportion. Gothic is primarily the perfection of exquisite organism, almost living in its consummate integrity and its sensitive interplay of forces. This perfectly co-ordinated structure is, of course, infused and transfigured by an intense sense of beauty, quite new in its forms, and given a spiritual and symbolical content peculiar to itself, the result being what, for want of a better term, we call Gothic. The two elements cannot be disassociated, as pedants feign, for, like all great art, it is in a sense sacramental, and the "outward and visible sign" may never be separated from the "inward and spiritual grace."\*

\* "Sacramentum est corporale vel materiale elementum foris sensibilibus propositum ex similitudine representans, et ex institutione significans et ex sanctificatione continens, aliquam invisibilem et spiritualem gratiam."  
—(Hugo de St. Victoire.)



Both processes may be followed through the great sequence of churches between the Seine, the Marne, and the Somme—or might have been a year ago. To-day it is safe to postulate nothing of a dim and ominous future; we know that much of this galaxy has been destroyed after seven centuries of careful cherishing through innumerable wars and revolutions. That all may go is possible, as the power that brought them into existence has gone, though in this case only for a time. Once, however, the great and triumphal progress from Jumièges through Noyon, Senlis, St. Denis, Laon, Paris, Amiens, to its final achievement at Reims, was a complete and visible record of the greatest and most headlong advance toward the real things in Christian civilisation by means of the real things in Christian civilisation history has ever recorded. Five of these—Senlis, Noyon, Laon, Amiens, and Reims lie either within the battle lines that have maintained themselves so long, or at least within sound of the guns; one has been destroyed—Reims; one thus far preserved—Amiens. The fate of the others is in doubt, together with that of all the lands that lie to the east, and the danger of irreparable loss is greater than ever before since the French Revolution.

There was no better place than this once-lovely region, now hidden from view in the lurid smoke and the poisoned fumes of a new and demoniac sort of war, in which to watch the swift growth to a splendid self-consciousness of Gothic architecture. The elements of Gothic organism had been developed in the twelfth century by the great Cluniac-Norman alliance, but this was only a beginning; Gothic quality was still to be achieved, and this consisted largely in three elements—cohesion, economy, and character. The first means the synthetic knitting of everything together, and the giving it dynamic power to develop from within outward; it means making structure absolutely central and comprehensive, but also beautiful; ornament, decoration, remaining something added to it, something of the *bene esse*, though not of the *esse*; deriving from it in every instance, but not necessary to its perfection. The second is the reducing of mass to its logical and structural (and also optical) minimum, bringing into play the forces of accommodation, balance, and active, as opposed to passive, resistance. The third is the hardest to describe or determine, and probably can only be perceived through comparison. It is the differentiation in quality, the



LAON



determination of personality, and it is hardly to be defined, though it is instantly perceived.

In the Abbaye aux Hommes, or Cérisy, or St. Georges de Bocherville, we find great majesty and beauty, many elements that are distinctive of true Gothic work and persist through its entire course, but none of these buildings is actually Gothic. In St. Germer de Fly, however, and in Sens and Noyon, while there seems at first little differentiation from the others, the Gothic spirit has found itself and is already working rapidly toward its consummation.

Of the condition of Noyon at the present time we know little; of what this may be in a few months' time we know less. The town itself was of the oldest, its foundation being Roman, and within its walls Chilperic was buried in 721, while Charlemagne was crowned King of the Franks about thirty years before he became Emperor, and Hugh, first of the Capetian dynasty, was here chosen king in 987. Incidentally, the town was also the birthplace of John Calvin. The ancient cathedral was burned in 1131 and the present work begun shortly after, though it is hard to believe that much of the existing structure antedates the year 1150. The crossing and transepts

date from about 1170, the nave about ten years later, while the west front and towers are of the early part of the next century. The certainty and calm assurance of the work is remarkable. Paris, which is later, is full of tentative experiments, but there is no halting here, rather a serene certainty of touch that is perfectly convincing. The plan is curious in that it has transepts with apsidal ends, after the fashion of Rhenish Romanesque, one of the few instances in France. The alternating system is used throughout, and the vault was originally sexpartite; the interior order consists of a low arcade, high triforium, triforium gallery, and a clerestory comprised wholly within the vault lines; round and pointed arches are used indiscriminately, and the flying buttresses are perhaps the earliest that emerged from the protection of the triforium roofs. In the choir, which is earliest in date, the ornament is rude, even rudimentary, though distinctly Gothic in form, but in the nave twenty years has served to change this into work of the most brilliant and classical beauty. In 1293 the whole town was destroyed by fire, and the cathedral wrecked; it was immediately reconstructed, however, and at this time the sexpartite gave place

to quadripartite vaulting, while the west front, with its great towers, very noble in their proportions and their powerful buttressing, was completed. This rebuilding and the loss of all the original glass has left Noyon less perfect than many of the neighbouring churches, but it still remained a grave and strikingly solemn example of the transition.

Not far away, past the huge and formidable ruins of Coucy, the greatest castle of the Middle Ages, whose lords haughtily proclaimed, "Roi ne says, ne prince, ne duc, ne comte aussi: Je suis le Sire de Coucy," is Laon on its sudden hill. How great the loss has been here we do not know, but the town has been frequently under German bombardment, and the end is not yet. Laon is unique, a masterly work of curious vitality, original, daring, and even rebellious against a growing tradition. In the Middle Ages it was vastly admired, but to us of a day more dull and timorous in architecture, because we have no art of our own and have found so little in life from which we could draw an inspiration, it is less safe and satisfying than such coherent and scholastic work as Amiens or Reims. Begun about 1165, it was finished in 1225, the growth being from the cross-

ing in all directions, for not only is the amazing west front of the central period of Gothic perfection, but the choir as well, for the unique square termination takes the place of a regular chevet which was part of the original design. This square-ended choir is the only one in France, and is thoroughly English in effect; moreover, the transepts have aisles and are the first in France to be so finished, while they have tribunes at the ends after the Norman fashion, and there is a central tower or lantern as well. The towers of Laon are its distinguishing glory, for there are five in all, out of an original seven, all incomplete, not one retaining its spire, but striking and immensely individual. The interior organism is not wholly coherent, for while the vaulting is sexpartite throughout, the system is regular, and was as manifestly intended for quadripartite vaulting as Noyon for sexpartite. The west front is vastly picturesque, if somewhat incoherent, and is clearly a growth from year to year; it lacks both the sublime calm and grandeur of Paris and the faultless organism of Reims, but its detail is as brilliantly conceived as any in France, while its carvings and sculptures are in the same class as the best of Hellas. In the tops of the towers



are the well-known stone effigies of oxen, placed there by the builders in recognition of the patient service of the beasts that year after year helped drag the heavy stones from the plain to the top of the hill where the cathedral stands.

In and around Laon were once innumerable religious houses, but nearly all their churches were destroyed during the French Revolution, which annihilated more noble art in five years than had happened in five centuries. St. Martin remains, and is of the middle of the twelfth century, but the church of the Abbey of St. Vincent is wholly destroyed.

South of Laon, and about as far away as Noyon, lies Soissons, an ancient town, famous in history, and containing, until the war, another masterpiece of mediæval art, the cathedral, which already has been made the target of German shells, and has suffered seriously. As a city, it antedated the Roman occupation, was Christianised toward the end of the third century, became a capital of the Merovings, and a notable city of the Carolingian dynasty. The south transept is the oldest part, and dates from about 1175, the choir was finished in 1212, the north transept and nave about 1250. Porter says of the south tran-

sept: "This portion of Soissons, one of the most ethereal of all twelfth-century designs, is the highest expression of that fairy-like, Saracenic phase of Gothic art that had first come into being at Noyon. Like Noyon, however, this transept lacks the elements of grandeur which are found in so striking a degree in the nave and choir of this same church of Soissons." The nave and choir are indeed amongst the noblest creations of Catholic art; for justness and delicacy of proportions, refinement of line, restraint in the placing and determination of ornament, Soissons ranks with Chartres and Bourges. The richness of its vertical lines is unusual, the mouldings clear, powerful, and distinguished in contour, and altogether it has well served for nearly seven centuries as a perfect exemplar of the Christian art of France as its highest point.

Already it has been appallingly shattered, one shell having struck the roof of the north aisle, hurling one of the nave shafts into fragments and obliterating an entire bay. Thus far it has been spared a conflagration, and if the Prussian lines are promptly forced back, it may still be preserved as a wonder for still further generations.

So far as the numberless other great churches

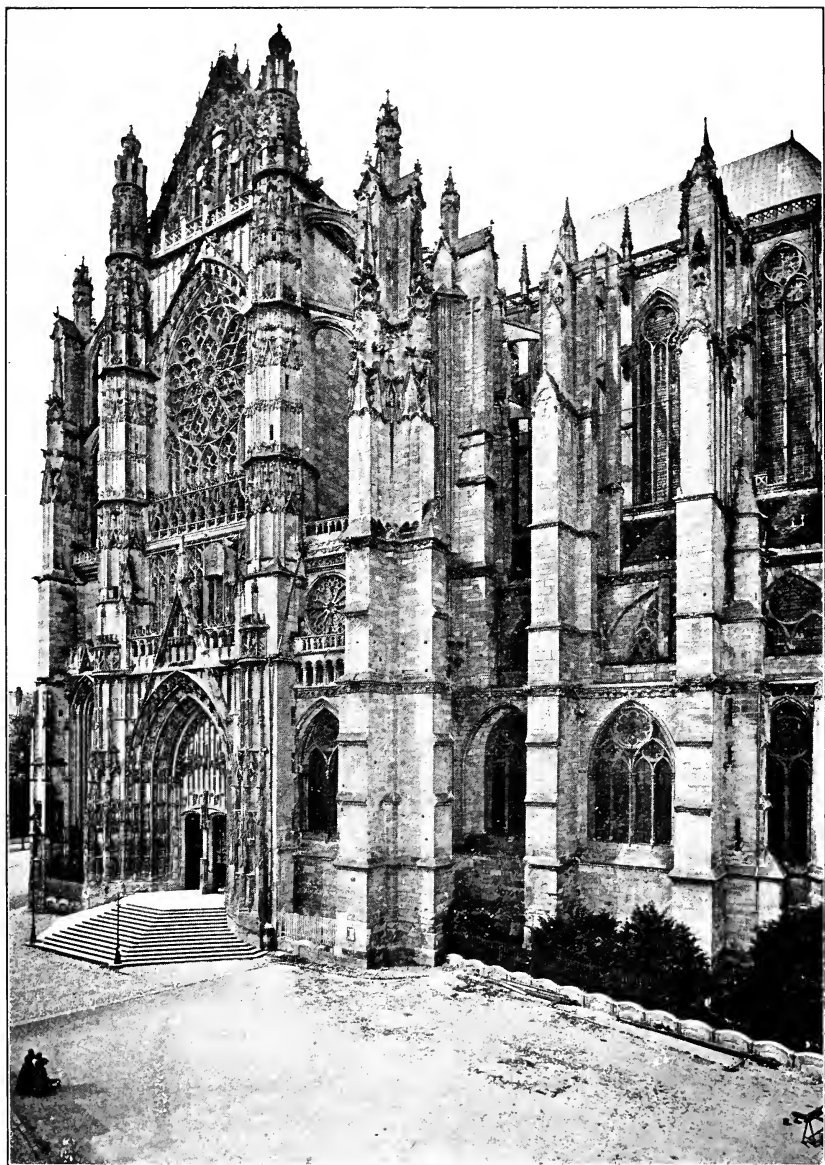
of Soissons are concerned, it has for long been too late; they perished, with uncounted others in this region, at the time of the Revolution. Of the vast abbey of St. Jean-des-Vignes nothing remains but the sumptuous west front, cut clear like an architectural "frontispiece" from all the rest, and even this has been further shattered by German gunfire. The royal abbey of Our Lady has become a military barracks, St. Crepin, St. Medard with its famous seven churches, all have vanished, and the loss is irreparable.

Nearer Paris we find Senlis, a further step in architectural development. The town itself is charming, and full of old art and old history. Roman walls, with sixteen towers, still remain, together with fragments of a royal palace of the French kings, from Clovis to Henri IV, with ancient houses, picturesque streets, desecrated churches, and monastic ruins, such as those of the Abbey of Victory, founded by Philip Augustus after the battle of Bouvines, and wrecked, of course, during the Revolution.

The cathedral is curious and fascinating. Set out in 1155 on enormous lines, it was curtailed both in height and length through the failure of adequate funds. It has been rebuilt, extended,

supplemented, century after century, until it has become almost an epitome of French architecture from the middle of the twelfth to the middle of the sixteenth century. The southwest tower (its mate is unfinished) is of the thirteenth-century culmination, and surpassed by no other spire in France for subtlety of composition and perfection of detail. One of its crocketed pinnacles has already been shot away, but apparently further danger is well removed, and will become progressively less threatening as the Prussian lines are driven back.

It is, of course, quite impossible even to note all the architectural monuments between the Seine and the frontiers of Belgium. Paris must be wholly left out, for St. Denis, St. Germain l'Auxerois, Notre Dame, and the Ste. Chapelle would justly require a volume to themselves. Rouen, with its cathedral, St. Ouen, St. Maclou, the Palais de Justice, rich with all the lace and embroidery of the flamboyant period, lies now well beyond danger, and so does Beauvais, where the nemesis of worldly pride overtook the lagging spiritual impulse that had made the Middle Ages the climax of Christian civilisation. Châlons-sur-Marne, once threatened, is now reprieved, and its



BEAUVAIS



cathedral, its churches of St. Jean and St. Loup, and its noble and distinguished Church of Our Lady are safe for another period.

Apart from the great architectural monuments are numberless others invaluable in archæology, and forming links in the great Gothic development: St. Etienne of Beauvais, St. Leu d'Esserent, Morienvall, Bury, St. Germer, and St. Remi of Reims—the last valuable beyond estimate, with an apse that was unparalleled as a masterpiece of transitional work when Gothic was in its first and finest estate, now wrecked and desecrated by shells that have burst its vaults into crumbled fragments and hurled its perfect windows in showers of splintered glass to the pavements heaped high with the wreck of masonry and of dismembered altars.

And as in the case of the great churches, so in that of the small, from Braisne to Caudebec, they cannot even be catalogued. The whole region was, and is, one of wonderful little parish churches, of all periods, and many of them are now only shapeless ruins. The great abbeys and smaller religious houses are practically gone, scores having fallen prey to the insane fury of the Revolution or the sordid secularism of the Restoration.

What we have lost may be seen from countless such lovely and pathetic fragments as St. Wandrille, near Caudebec, given a new fame through the name of Maeterlinck, and so linked with the greater martyrdom of Belgium in these last days. This, like its myriad companions, was architecture of the most singular beauty, the loss of which leaves the world poor, so poor, indeed, that it had at first nothing wherewith to meet the last assault of the enemy. The loss is being made good, the penalty already is paid, and though one could not—one would not—restore or rebuild these silent fragments of exquisitely wrought stone, meshed in tall trees and clambering vines, the vision is possible of new foundations, equal in number to these that are gone, each an expiation and a spiritual guard, each making late reparation for the past, guaranteeing a future immunity from perils of the same nature as those that now shake the world.



## VI

### AMIENS AND REIMS

TWO monuments there are to the east of the Seine that form the realisation of the dim but dominant ideal toward which Christian society in France was tending even from the days of St. Germer and Jumièges, through the intermediate and progressive steps of Noyon, Soissons, Laon-Amiens, and Reims. Equal in fame, counting no others in their own category save only Chartres and Bourges, the one remains, the other has passed for ever.

It is a strange sensation for us to-day to watch from afar the slow and implacable destruction of one of the greatest works of art in the world, for we must go back more than a century to find any catastrophe of a similar nature. What happened then, when half a hundred masterpieces of divinely directed human intelligence and aspiration were reduced to scrap-heaps at the hands of revolution, is very far away, and the irreparable loss is as unknown to-day as it was unappreciated then. We can no more reconstruct for our understand-

ing Cluny, St. Martin of Tours, or Avranches than we can restore the catalogue of the Alexandrian library; mercifully we cannot estimate our loss. Back of this era of annihilation we must go two centuries before we find in England under Henry VIII a similar episode of infamy. The case of Reims is wholly different; there are tens of thousands who knew it for what it was—the crowning manifestation of a crowning civilisation, and for them the loss is personal, poignant, and unexampled, a horror that sophistry cannot palliate nor time destroy.

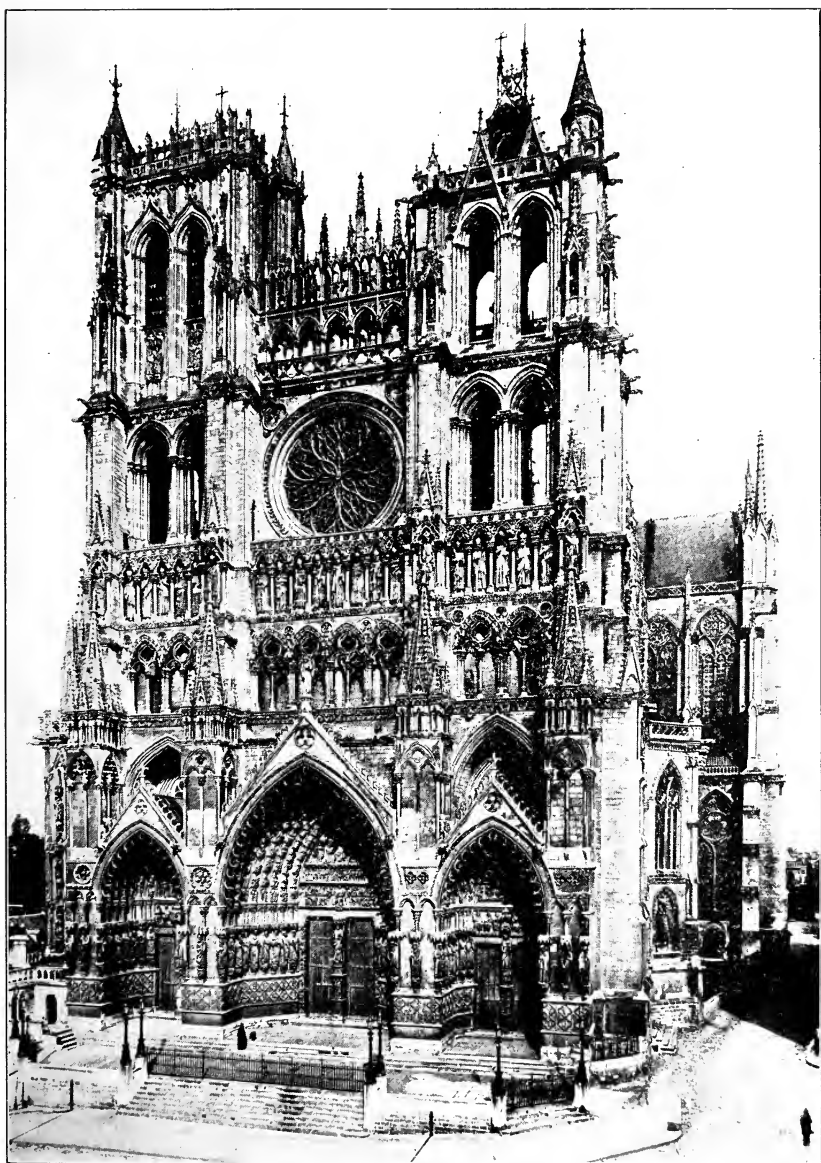
Of the two great churches, Amiens could more easily have been spared. The word is ill chosen; Amiens in ruins, its exquisite façade with its perfect sculptures seared and shattered by bursting shells and consuming fire, would have been a catastrophe that could only put to the test the most stoical fortitude, but—it is neither Chartres nor Bourges nor Reims, and simply because the perfect balance between all possible elements in great architecture is here trembling toward its overthrow. Gothic art had three controlling forces working toward an unattainable perfection; structural integrity irradiated by consummate invention and an almost divine creative genius;

passion for that exalted beauty that is unchangeable and eternal, expressed through new forms at once northern and Catholic; the just balance and intimate interplay of these two impulses. Its virtues, like all virtues, were most easily transmuted into vices, once the controlling balance was overthrown, and each was, in its stimulating possibilities, a constant and irresistible temptation toward excess. In Reims, the beginnings of which antedate Amiens by only a decade, the balance remains true and firm; in Amiens we see the first fatal steps in the development of a purely human (and notably French) logic, toward that intellectual pride, that almost arrogance of self-confidence, that found its nemesis in the unstable marvel of Beauvais.

In an admirable but anonymous little book called "Some French Cathedrals," the author says: "French Gothic was most rational and most beautiful while it still remembered its Romanesque origin. At Amiens it was just beginning to forget that and to lose itself in dreams of an impossible romance which changed it from architecture into a very wonderful kind of ornamental engineering." This subtle and significant change you feel everywhere except in the

inimitable façade. The interior is too high, the masonry too wire-drawn and tenuous, the chevet too giddy and insecure. It is true that all but the west front has been impossibly restored, so that outwardly little remains of the original work, while the glass is gone from all but the ambulatory windows, leaving the nave a cold blaze of intolerable light. Nevertheless, the fundamental fault is there; the architect intrudes himself in place of the *dévôte*, the craft of man supplants the guiding of God; so we have one of the most technically perfect of cathedrals, and one of the least inspired; you must go to the Rhine to find, in Cologne, a more self-conscious and serenely satisfied work, and it is well to make this comparison, for by so doing you realise the real greatness of Amiens, and how it fails only in comparison with the three perfect examples of an art that wholly expresses the great concept of mediæval Catholic philosophy, that in life, as we know it, material and spiritual are inseparable, that their just balance is the true end of man in this phase of existence, and that therefore sacramentalism is of the *esse* of religion, and as well the law of life.

As a whole, both from within and without, Amiens in a measure fails, but this does not hold



AMIENS



of its several parts. The west front is still a masterpiece of consummate and wholly original design, though the towers have been incongruously (but engagingly) terminated in later centuries. The three great doors, the first and second arcades, and the rose-window story contain more brilliant, spirited, ingenious, and withal beautiful design than any similar work in the world, while the ornament (there is a wild-rose border around the archivolts of the great porches that finds no rival in Greece) and the sculptures reach a level of decorative and emotional significance that marks the time of their production as the crowning moment in human culture and in Christian civilisation.

We turn to Reims—we turn now in reverence to the memory of Reims—in a different spirit. Master Robert of Luzarches was a master, and knew it. Master Robert of Coucy was the servant of a Lord who was greater than he, and knew this also, and was proud of his service. He was just as great an architect as his brother of Amiens, but he worked in a godly fear, and so he built the noblest church in Christendom. This is not to say that its nave order is equal to Chartres, its rhythm and composition equal to Bourges.

In every great church from 1175 to 1225 there is some one element or more that is final and unexcelled, but at Reims there was a great consistency, a noble and all-embracing competence, that placed it in a class by itself.

Reims was without a fault; perhaps this made its appeal less poignant and searching than that of the eager and sometimes less-perfect efforts of men more human in their inadequacies. Man is the creature that tries, and it is perhaps only human to feel a reverence that lessens affection for those who seem to transcend the limits that are set to human accomplishment.

Every other cathedral in France is a splendid chronicle, a record of changing times, changing endeavours, changing impulses. Men of varying personalities have wrought out their ideals, year after year, and the result is in each case a great sequence, a glorious approximation. Reims was begun in 1211, on the first anniversary of the burning of its predecessor, and it was finished, manifestly in accordance with an original and pre-determined design, within fifty years. The three gables and the upper stories of the western towers are a century later, otherwise the work is consistent and a single conception. The great ideal



comprised a crowning group of seven towers, each with its slender spire, none of which was ever completed, and had this majestic scheme been carried out, the church would have been the most complete, as it was the most perfect, of the architectural manifestations of Christianity.

It is impossible to analyse Reims, to describe its vital and exquisite organism, to laud its impeccable scale, its vivid and stimulating originality, to explain the almost incredible competence and beauty of its buttressing, the serene delicacy of its detail, to dwell once more on the glory of its sculpture that ranked with that of Greece, on the splendour of its glass that was rivalled only at Chartres. It is impossible to do this now, for its passing has been too recent and too grievous. Death brings silence for a time to those that knew the dead.

In another chapter I have tried to say something of the sculpture of Reims, a crowning glory where all was glorious, but sculpture does not mean the human figure alone; it covered in the Middle Ages all forms of beauty chiselled out of stone and marble, and the man who wrought the wild-rose design on the archivolts of Amiens was just as great an artist as he who fashioned the

Virgin of the south transept, or the "Beau Dieu"; perhaps he was the same man. Gothic "ornament" is quite as beautiful as are Gothic saints and angels, and here at Reims the stone carving was of the finest. Every space of ornament—capital, crocket, boss, frieze, and string-course—was a combination of these great elements: architectural self-restraint and identity with the work as a whole, passionate love for all the beautiful things in nature, joy in doing everything, even the cutting of unseen surfaces, just as well as man could do the work. It is not better than the ornament of Amiens or Chartres; in some passages Amiens seems to have achieved the highest attainable point, but it is of the same quality, and that is enough glory for any church.

Most of this inimitable art already has been blasted and calcined away, and the same fate has overtaken the glass. Here was an achievement of the highest in an art of the best. In the light (literally) of the stained glass of our own times, we had found some difficulty in realising that this was an art at all, but it needed only a visit to Chartres or Reims for enlightenment to come to us. At Chartres, in the very earliest years of the thirteenth century, it reached its



REIMS



culmination; there is no greater glass anywhere than this, almost no greater art, and Reims, while less complete (the aisle windows were wholly removed by eighteenth-century canons on the score of an added "cheerfulness"), was of the same school, though later and just past the cresting of the wave. If it lacked the unearthly clarity and divine radiance of the western lancets, and the "Belle Verriere" of Chartres, it had qualities of its own, particularly its most glorious azures and rubies, that allowed no rival, and it easily ranked with Chartres and Bourges and Poitiers as manifesting the possibilities of a noble art, and a lost art, at its highest point of achievement.

So far as can be learned, all this has perished and it cannot be restored. It lies in shivered heaps where it has fallen and the chapter of the glass of Reims is closed.

Four months ago the ruin already was irreparable, and since then bombardments have been frequent and merciless, nor has the enemy as yet been driven beyond the range of gun-fire. Whether even the shattered and crumbling fabric—wherefrom all carving, all detail, all glass, all sculpture has been burned and blasted away—survives in the end, none can foretell; but one

thing is sure, and that is that no "restoration" must ever be attempted. If enough remains so that careful hands may preserve it from disintegration and make it available for the worship of God, well and good, so long as no imitations, whether in stone or metal or glass, are intruded to mock its vanished glory and obliterate for future generations the record of an indelible crime. For seven centuries its beauty and its perfection have spoken to succeeding generations, each less willing to listen than the last. In its ruin and its devastation it will speak more clearly and to more willing ears, than in any pretentious rehabilitation.

To the sordid wickedness of its destruction has been added the insult of Prussian promises of complete restoration—a catastrophe that would crown the first with a greater and more contemptible indignity. Instead, let Reims remain as it is left, and then, in Paris, let France, regenerated and redeemed, as already has gloriously happened, make for ever visible her restoration, through blood and suffering, to her old ideals, by carrying out her vow to build in honour of Ste. Jeanne d'Arc a great new church, raise a new Reims, like the old in plan and form and dimensions. Not a copy,

but a revival, with the old ideals, the old motives, the old self-consecration; different, as the new must differ from the old, but akin in spirit and in truth.

If one only knew how to interpret it, there is some mysterious significance in the centring of the war of the world around Reims and in the persistent and successful efforts of the Prussians to raze it to the ground. Seven centuries ago the mystics of St. Victor would have read the riddle, but for too long now we have been out of temper with symbolism and too averse to the acceptance of signs and portents to be able to see even dimly the correspondences and the significance of those human happenings that are actually outside human control. In a way Reims was the ancient heart of France, as Paris is not, and it always was a sacred city above all others—and sacred it is now as never before. It was here that the Christianising of the Franks was sealed by the baptism of Clovis, A. D. 496, by St. Remi, the canonised bishop who occupied the see for seventy-five years. The crowning of kings (every sovereign but four for a period of fifteen hundred years came here for his coronation), the assembling of great councils of the Church, the beneficent ac-

tivities of universities and schools of philosophy were all commonplaces of the life of the city, while it was here that Ste. Jeanne d'Arc finally discomfited the English and led her King to his crowning in the church that is now destroyed.

Time and again the city has been devastated, from the Vandals of 392 to those of 1914. During the Revolution its churches suffered bitterly; the cathedral and St. Remi, until then, were rich with unnumbered shrines, altars, statues, tombs, while cloisters and religious buildings of many kinds surrounded them on all sides. All this wealth of hoarded art that expressed the piety and culture of centuries was swept away, even to the sacred ampulla of holy oil, piously believed to have been brought by a dove for the consecration of Clovis and ever after miraculously replenished for each succeeding coronation. To this irreparable devastation was added the indignity of official "restoration," though in the case of the cathedral at the able and scrupulous hands of Viollet-le-Duc, and in the nineteenth century the picturesque and beautiful old streets gave place to boulevards and a general Hausmanising on approved Parisian lines, so that in 1914 the city had become dull and somewhat pretentious, framing the two priceless



jewels, the Church of Our Lady of Reims and that of the holy St. Remi.

All is now gone, the glorious and the insignificant alike overwhelmed in indiscriminating ruin. The glass and the statues that had survived war, revolution, and stupidity are shattered in fragments, the roofs consumed by fire, the vaults burst asunder, the carved stones calcined and flaking hourly in a dreary rain on blood-stained pavements where a hundred kings have trod and into deserted streets that have echoed to the footsteps of threescore generations. The city has passed; *deleta est Carthago*, but it has left a memory, a tradition, and an inspiration that may yet play a greater part in the rebuilding of civilisation than could have been achieved by its remaining monuments as they stood making their unheeded appeal on the day the first shell was fired from the Prussian batteries on the eastern hills.

The tendency I have spoken of which showed itself in Amiens, the breaking up of the mediæval integrity and a consequent inclination toward undue emphasis on structural and intellectual arrogance, never went very far because of the ill days that fell on France. The victory of the

French crown over the Papacy, with the resulting transfer of the Holy See to Avignon, was the ruin of Catholic civilisation in France, as well as in Italy and the rest of Christendom. The Church became subservient to the state and progressively corrupt in root and branch. The wars with England resulted in nothing less than ruin, and culture and art came to an end. By 1370 building had become thin, poor, uninspired, and yet, within the next ten years flamboyant architecture appeared, and the fifteenth century opened with a sudden burst of artistic splendour. Heaven knows what it all means; France was at her lowest depth, and yet, without warning, a regeneration took place. The Blessed Jeanne d'Arc appears like a miraculous vision, Orleans is saved, the rightful king is crowned, and though the martyrdom of the saviour of France takes place in 1430, the English are driven out in 1456, and a new day begins.

Was Jeanne d'Arc a single manifestation of a new spirit that had entered society, or was this itself a continuation of what she had initiated under God? The answer does not really matter, the important fact is that a great regeneration took place, and a new type of art followed in its

wake. Now the tendency was away from the proud efficiency of a glorified architectural engineering and toward the other element in architecture, beauty of form and splendour of ornament. It was almost as though the French had turned to religion and beauty as their only refuge from the miseries of their estate. In the very first years of the fifteenth century, at the darkest hours of France, Notre Dame de l'Epine, close by Châlons on the Marne, was built in 1419. Caudebec in 1426, St. Maclou, Rouen, in 1432, and after these for more than a century France abandoned herself to the creation of works of architectural art that, whatever they may lack of the splendid consistency and the divine serenity of the thirteenth century, are nevertheless amongst the loveliest works of man. Beauvais is an admirable example of the two tendencies; begun in 1225, its impossible choir was finished in 1272, only to collapse twelve years later, paying the penalty of its structural arrogance. For forty years it was in process of reconstruction, after a more conservative fashion though of its original dimensions, and in 1500 the transepts were begun and finished fifty years later. In beauty and in an almost riotous richness, they are the

crowning work of this phase of design, while the choir itself, with its marvellously articulated system of buttresses, is a creation of sheer architectural power almost unrivalled. Ambitious and defiant, the canons now, in 1550, reared a vast spire over the crossing, nearly 450 feet high, and of the same sumptuous design as the transepts. The whole stupendous erection fell twenty-five years later, and has never been rebuilt, while the nave was never even begun; so Beauvais remains a vast fragment, and a living commentary on the excesses and the penalties of that pride of life that succeeded to the spiritual humility of the Middle Ages.

The new style, however, was perfectly adapted to the new life of secular supremacy, and, with few exceptions, both here in eastern France and in Flanders and Brabant and the Netherlands, the great civic monuments and the innumerable châteaux of an expanding and ripening society are couched in its beautiful and elaborate terms. Essentially it is a mode of ornament, containing no new element in organism, but always beautiful and, in France at all events, marked always by delicate and admirable taste. With its flame-like tracery, its complicated pinnacles, its scaf-

foldings of intricate latticework; with its curved and aspiring lines, glimmering niches, pierced parapets, open-work spires, and its tangled foliage, dainty filigree-work and sculptured lace, it is a marvel of imagination, dramatic sense, and consummate craftsmanship. Sometimes it is strikingly competent in its composition, as in the transepts of Beauvais and the front of Troyes, the latter being in its unfulfilled promise (it is only a beginning) one of the great façades of France, but frequently its greatest weakness is forgetfulness of consistency in a passion for beauty of line and light and shade that became almost insane. With the beginning of the sixteenth century the new art began slowly to decay in ecclesiastical buildings, but it continued for at least another hundred years in châteaux and civic work, and it is this in particular that is now disappearing through a war waged by unprecedented methods and in accordance with principles (if we may call them such) which hitherto have been found associated only with barbarian invasions or the frenzies of a mad anarchy that has called itself Revolution.

For the more distinguished châteaux we must go outside our chosen field, to the Loire, Touraine, or to other parts of France where the devastation

of past wars and revolutions is less complete. There is Pierrefonds, of course, if one cares for that sort of thing, but of authentic castles of the sixteenth century there are few of notable quality, though many minor farms and manors still remained in August, 1914. Ecouen and Chantilly are exceptions, and the latter, given to the nation by the Duc d'Aumale when he was exiled by the republic for the crime of belonging to the legitimate line of kings, is a good example of the princely buildings of the Renaissance when the last fires of Gothic spirit were dying away.

It is not so long ago that half the towns in France between the Seine and the Belgian frontier were threaded by wonderful little streets of stone-built and half-timber houses three centuries old, and bright with squares and market-places framed in old architecture of Francis I and Henri II. Their quaint and delicate beauty was too much for the nineteenth century, however, which revolted against an old art as it revolted against an old culture and an older religion, so nearly all are gone, their place being taken by substitutes, the destruction of which could hardly be counted against the Prussians for unrighteousness, if one considered æsthetic questions alone, which is, for-

tunately, impossible. For these dim old streets and sunny silent squares one could, until a few months ago, go confidently across the border, finding in Flanders, Brabant, Liège, and Luxembourg relief from the appalling sophistication that had taken possession of the old cities of Champagne. Even in France, until last year, were Douai, Pont-à-Mousson, Meaux, and of course Arras, though now of some of these worse than nothing remains. In the latter city was once, also, a particularly splendid example of those great civic halls that showed forth the pride and the independence of the industrial cities of the later Middle Ages, and another stood in Douai. As Flanders and Brabant are, however, the chosen places for this particular manifestation of an industrial civilisation, so different to our own in spirit and in expression, we may include them therewith, where they racially and historically belong; and having followed the development of an essentially religious art in France from Jumièges to Beauvais, note its translation in later years into civic forms, in the little and heroic Kingdom with so great and heroic a history, now and for many months shut off from the world still free, by the veil of smoke and poisoned gases.

## VII

### THE BURGHERS AND THEIR BUILDING

THE great civic halls were those of Audenaarde, Brussels, Louvain, Malines, Termonde, Bruges, Ghent, Ypres, and Arras, and each of these cities was as well full of wonderful old houses, some private residences, some quarters for the various guilds. It is impossible to discriminate between past and present tense in describing them; some are wholly gone, as Ypres and Arras, others we suppose still remain, but how long this may be true one cannot say. If we lose what we have lost in the onrush of a victorious army, and in its long holding of defensive lines in the most amazing siege in history, what may we not expect at the hands of an army in defeat, fighting its way back to its own frontiers for a last desperate stand? Arras, Ypres, and Louvain were hard enough to lose, but the soul shudders at the thought of Bruges and Ghent, Antwerp and Brussels, fought over day after day and abandoned to pillage and destruction.



The historical significance of these halls is very great; they put into material (and as we had thought enduring) form the oligarchical democracy, the great wealth, the pride, the sumptuous and lavish spirit of successive generations of princely merchants and manufacturers. Religion was still a vital force, but it no longer stood alone, and now the secular organisations of guilds and free cities claimed and received the tribute of wealth through the ministry of art. It was not the old art of the days of cathedral building and the founding of abbeys and universities, it was quite a different art altogether, but it fitted the new motives and ideals as the other could not do. Of severity, self-restraint, reticence, it has nothing; it is all splendour and magnificence, emulation and rivalry, but it is still craftsman's art, and whatever the taste of these great and even fantastic buildings, there is proof of joyful workmanship and of a jealous maintenance of the highest possible standards.

Ypres was the first in point of time, and first in absolute artistic value. Begun by Count Baldwin in the year 1200, it was remodelled, rebuilt, embellished for a hundred years, and finally the "Nieuwerke," of the most abandoned Renaissance

taste, was added to the east. Of huge dimensions—the main front was four hundred and thirty-three feet in length, while the great tower was two hundred and thirty feet high—the design was as simple, imposing, and direct as one would expect to find during the early thirteenth century. It was a simple parallelogram, three stories high, nobly arcaded, with ranges of fine niches which contained statues of the Counts of Flanders and other worthies, until these were completely destroyed by the French during the Revolution. A vast, high-pitched roof covered all, broken in the middle by the belfry, with its corner turrets, which were echoed at the four corners of the building by similar spires. A simpler composition could hardly be imagined, or one more impressive in its grave restraint. Architecturally it was unique; there was and is no other rival of a similar nature, and its value was inestimable. Bold in conception, straightforward, direct, confident without assurance, it was one great masterpiece of the civic art of the Middle Ages, miraculously preserved for six centuries as the visible manifestation of the supreme quality of a great people and a great art. Both without and within it had that spontaneousness, that fine, frank



THE DESTROYED HÔTEL DE VILLE OF ARRAS

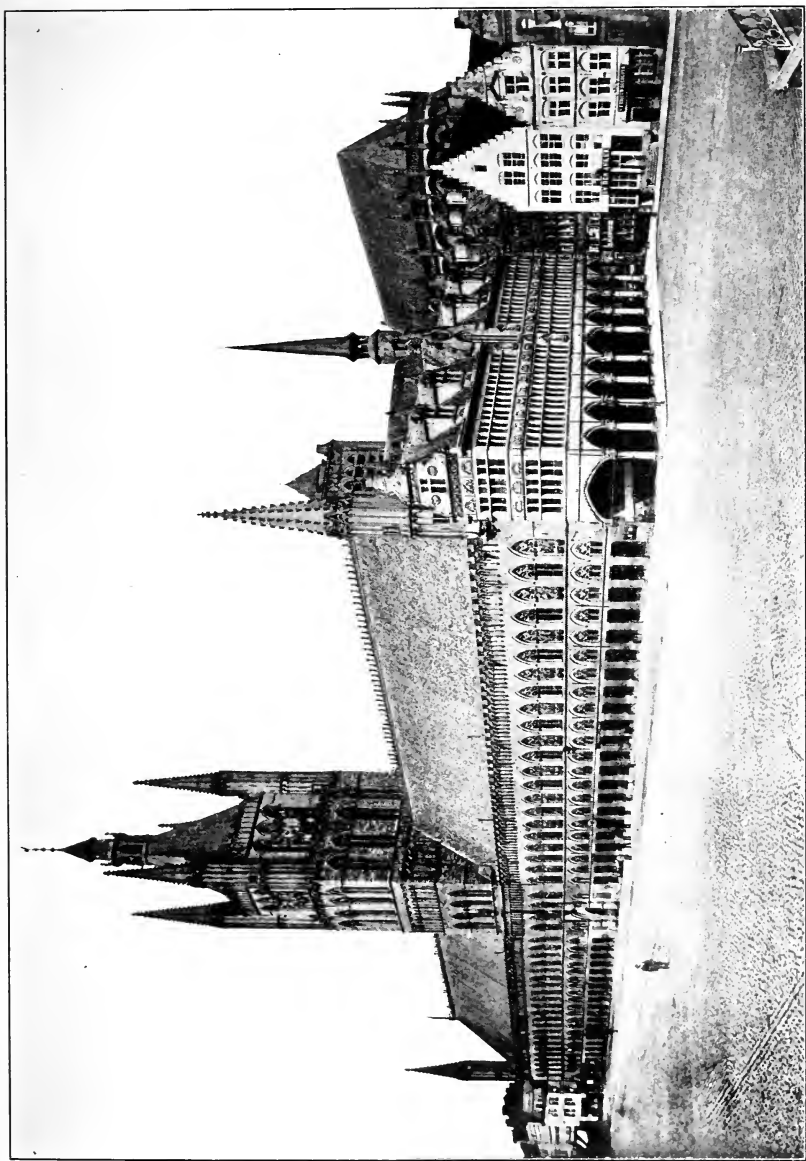


naïveté that one finds in all crescent periods and searches for in vain in the following days that history always selects for particular admiration. Analyse it and see how simple it all was. First there were three chief organic elements: the great wall unbroken by any "features," without buttresses because it was not vaulted; the enormous, high-pitched roof bare of all gables or diversions of any kind; the square, unbuttressed tower in the middle, with a tall, pointed roof and cupola, surrounded by four high pinnacles of the simplest form. It is as calm and simple as a Greek temple, and like this, also, it is final in the perfection of its proportions and its relation of parts; also its great, quiet elements are left alone, not tortured into nervous complexity of varying planes and excitable vagaries of light and shade. Forty-eight pointed and mullioned windows along the main floor give the horizontal divisions, while vertically there were three stages: the low, lintelled colonnade, a mezzanine with very beautiful traceried windows, one to each bay, and a vast main wall without horizontal subdivisions but with a delicately designed and very broad course of traceried panelling above the splendid sequence of great windows, like a lofty blind parapet. The tower

was equally simple, its seven stories exquisitely varied in their heights and windowing, but calm always, and final in their sense of exactly felt relations. The pinnacles also, four on the tower and others at either end of the façade, were as simply and perfectly designed as could be asked, without fantastic exuberance or a straining for effect; just traceried octagons with one series of pointed gables and high, crocketed spires.

The "Nieuwerke," in its ridiculous Renaissance effrontery snuggled up against the silent, absorbed, unnoticing giant, was like an architectural version of Merlin and Vivien; silly and scented impudence in its vain approximations to grave dignity and a self-respect proof against all blandishments.

The great hall inside was just the same: an astonishing room, four hundred and thirty feet long, broken only by the columns and arches bearing the great tower, and roofed with a mass of oak timbering like an ancient and enormous ship turned bottom up. Huge oaken beams rose against the wall dividing it into panels, and each pair supported equally gigantic tie-beams braced by rough-hewn diagonal struts. It was barn-building, if you like, but a good barn is better art than a Newport



THE DESTROYED CLOTH HALL OF YPRES





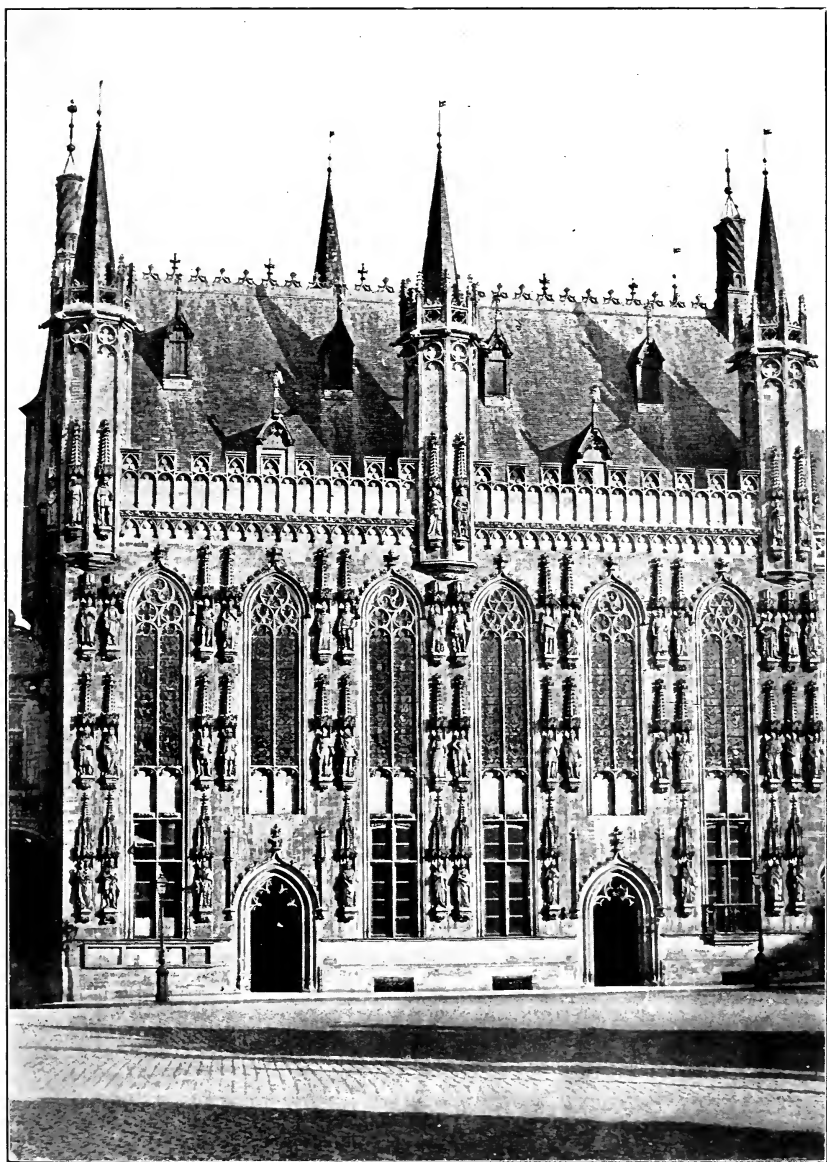
“cottage”; and this splendidly direct “barn” at Ypres had a quality the Louvre could never attain.

Each panel of this colossal and almost interminable wall was destined for great historical pictures, most of which had been completed, and the effect was majestic in its combination of colour and carpentry. Of it all nothing now remains, as I have said, except a single turret at one end. The greatest surviving monument of the civic architecture of the Middle Ages has been slowly pounded to powder, and has taken its place with the other lost masterpieces of a world that from time to time can create but can somehow never retain ability to enjoy or even to understand. Month after month it was the special target of Prussian shells; the first breeched the wall to the right of the tower and were followed by others that started fires which swept the building from end to end, consuming the enormous timbered roof, destroying the painted walls, crumbling the tracery of the tall tower. For a time the burned-out walls remained, and German professors spoke gently and with bland reassurance of the simple task of restoration, but this last indignity has ceased to threaten, for

recently the batteries have resumed their work; little by little the belfry has been shot away, the fretted arcades have been splintered into road-metal, and now at last the destruction is complete; what once was the glory of Ypres, the pride of Flanders, the delight of the architect, is now only a heap of refuse masonry, with one pinnacle standing alone, accusing, in the midst of ruin from which there is no salvation, for which history will search in vain for shadow of excuse.

In sequence of time, the old "Halles" of Malines come next, as portions of them date from 1311, but they have been reconstructed at various times, enlarged in several styles, and in the end were never completed, for their great belfry never succeeded in getting above the roof. Nevertheless they were a wonderfully picturesque and even theatrical composition of pointed portals, fantastic gables, dormers, and turrets, and a very engaging epitome of five centuries of architectural mutations.

The Hôtel de Ville of Bruges is as consistent and perfect as Malines was casual and irresponsible. It was begun in 1376, the corner-stone being laid by Louis de Mâle, and if there is anywhere a more complete example of civic architec-



BRUGES, HÔTEL DE VILLE



ture, combining the restraint and the simplicity of early Gothic with the exquisite ornament and the sense of decorative beauty of the latest Gothic, it is not of record. It seems to come at the mid-most point, when everything met together, without loss and without exaggeration, for the production of a living example of what society is capable when it achieves a perfect, if unenduring, equilibrium. It is a masterpiece of architectural composition, of brilliant and supremely intelligent design, while it is vivified by a poetry and an inspiration that exist only at a few crowning moments in history. Even now it is one of the loveliest buildings in Europe; what it must have been once, when its fifty statues, each under its crocketed canopy (they also were pulled down and hammered in pieces during the French Revolution), its tracery, balustrades, and pinnacles were blazing with colour and gilding, passes the imagination. It is only a small building of six bays subdivided by its three turrets into two triple groups with a doorway in each. The composition is very subtle and quite original. while the design is emphasised vertically, there being no horizontal members which run through from end to end, though the levels are very delicately indi-

cated by window mullions, niches, panels, traceried arches, and the crowning parapet. It is one of the least obvious of architectural compositions and, I am disposed to think, one of the best. While it lacks the Doric simplicity of Ypres, it has a sensitive rhythm and a richness of light and shade without studied intricacy or premeditated theatricalism that places it amongst the few very perfect works of art. It is a "poetic" composition in the highest sense, or rather it is akin to music of the mode that followed the Gregorian and opened up new possibilities of a more complex, if no more poignant, spiritual expression. It is perhaps the most perfect single piece of architecture in Belgium, and if it is extinguished in the night of Armageddon we lose a thing of inestimable value, unequalled, irreplaceable, even as we have lost that equally inestimable spiritual force that brought it into existence.

The "Halles" also, with their famous "Belfry of Bruges" are a particularly noble example of the same period of artistic supremacy, though they lack consistency, for only the lower stages of the amazing tower are original, this portion of the work being completed about 1296. All the upper part is of the very end of the fifteenth

century, and the octagonal upper stage is of no high order of design. Once this also was crowned by a slender spire having a statue of St. Michael sixteen feet high, which must have brought the stupendous erection almost to a height of five hundred feet, for even now the topmost balustrade is three hundred and fifty-two feet above the street. Ten years after the spire was finished it was destroyed by lightning, rebuilt, destroyed again, and then left in its present condition.

Brussels followed Bruges, and its huge City Hall was begun about 1404. Compared with Arras, Bruges, or Louvain, it is dry and somewhat unimaginative, with a curious modern look that may, in part, be due to very drastic restorations and to the devilish ingenuity in destruction of the French Revolutionists. In the beginning, however, it failed in subtle proportions, and in point of composition as well. Its belfry, graceful as it is, is thin and artificial in effect, while the façade is formal without the grave majesty of Ypres, rich without the sensitive refinement of Bruges or the riotous exuberance of Louvain. This is not to condemn it as bad; except for the supreme qualities of the three monuments last mentioned it would stand high in the architec-

tural scale, but it is impossible to avoid comparisons, and through these it suffers, perhaps unjustly.

Less than fifty years after Brussels came Louvain, and so far as good art is concerned the three-quarters of a century since Bruges has not been altogether well spent. As in the case of religious architecture, an ungoverned passion for beauty and craftsmanship has resulted in the destruction of the sane and noble balance in such churches as Reims, such civic halls as Bruges and Ypres, while nothing is left but an almost impossible luxuriance, as of a northern flower forced in the hot, moist air of a greenhouse. The Hôtel de Ville of Louvain, spared by some inconsequent and unnatural whim of those who wrecked all the city around and gave over the priceless libraries of the university to the flames, is one of the smallest of its kind in Belgium; it is only one hundred and thirteen feet long, forty-one feet wide, and seventy feet to the level of its parapet—about the dimensions, let us say, of an average New York dwelling of the better class. It is less a building than an ornament—a shrine, a tabernacle for the sanctuary of a cathedral. You feel that you want to take it up and polish it, you regard it as you do an ivory carving from Peking,





THE HOTEL DE VILLE OF LOUVAIN



and so considered it is well-nigh matchless, but it still remains outside the category of architecture, and if you compare it with the Ste. Chapelle, you see at once that the life is already almost gone from a great art, even if it has passed for the moment into a supreme kind of decoration.

In making that statement one is led unawares into one of those generalisations that contains less than half the truth. The life had indeed gone from the larger, the official architecture, the art of the Church, of the commune. After this there was little more than a sorry tale of rapid degeneration, until the French and the Jesuits came with their new style, either clever and often in good taste at the hands of the secular power, or tawdry and rococo when popularised by the new religious order that was the first incarnation of that "efficiency" that in the end became the obsession of the world and the root of the war. It is true that the new fashion rapidly superseded the dying and disintegrating spirit of mediævalism, and never a Bruges town hall or a Malines cathedral came again; instead we get the dull and blundering seventeenth-century portion of the Ghent Hôtel de Ville and the showy and very vulgar Jesuit churches, such as that in Antwerp (at-

tributed to Rubens) and the Cathedral of Arras. On the other hand, and this is too often forgotten, the degradation of state architecture always precedes by many years, sometimes centuries, the downfall of the people's art, and after a great era of high character and cultural attainments the burghers and lesser nobility, the farmers and merchants and smaller monastic houses continue instinctively to build beautifully, prolonging the old traditions, unhampered by clever architects and the commands of irresponsible fashion, until at last even they succumb and their art falls to the dead level of the stupid artifice that for long had prevailed amongst the great of earth.

So in France while the barbarities of the Louvre were being perpetrated, the loveliest little châteaux and farms and village churches were rising almost as though nothing had happened; so in Germany, Heidelberg and Dresden could not prevent the Tyrol and Rothenbourg, Hildesheim and the Black Forest and the Rhineland from creating the eternally delightful timber houses that far more exactly expressed a racial quality that was to endure in all its fineness, until the end of the nineteenth century saw its ending as well. So in England, Henry VIII and Edward VI might de-

stroy the then vital art, and Elizabeth might expunge its very memory, building ridiculous semi-German conceits to the grief of the judicious; nevertheless the deep-lying tradition prevailed outside court circles and those of the Erastianised Church, and the sixteenth-century domestic architecture of the Cotswolds, of Surrey, Suffolk, Norfolk, and Essex—indeed of almost every county in England—was, in its way, just as good architecture as that which universally prevailed before the “Great Pillage.”

Precisely the same thing happened in Belgium, and half the visual charm of cities such as Bruges, Tournai, Termonde, Ypres, and of all that countryside that has not been devastated by the insane cult of coal and iron, is due to the colloquial domestic architecture of its crooked old streets, its wide-spread market-places, and its drowsy canals and winding quays. In the language of the schools there is no “architecture,” properly speaking, in the Quai aux Avoines, or the Grand Béguinage, or the old almshouses of the Abbaye de St. Trond in Malines, along the banks of the Dyle in murdered Louvain, on the Quai aux Herbes in Ghent, the market-place in Ypres, the Quai du Rosaire, and the Quai Verte in Bruges.

All the same, in the simple and naïve houses and hospitals and convents, with their windows and doors where they are wanted, their big roofs and gables and friendly chimneys, their frank use of native materials, and their almost unfailing sense of pleasant proportions, we have what thus far no school has been able to teach.

In the earlier work—early, that is, for domestic architecture, say of the sixteenth century—while there is great individuality, each burgher expressing himself and his own tastes to the full, there is a very courtly regard for his neighbours, and a curious sense of restraint in the light of what the city itself might expect from its citizens. There is a well-bred uniformity of scale, a reticence in detail, a total lack of jealous emulation that speaks well for the self-respect of the old builders. Most of the great houses of the preceding century are gone, either razed entirely or mutilated and degraded to base uses; Bruges, for example, that once was rich in sumptuous mansions of nobles and great merchants, has now almost none, but the quays of Ghent still retain their fine rows of guild-houses and dwellings, and until a year ago Ypres once had them also, that are models of fine civic architecture (and of civic

spirit as well), and might well serve as such to a more chaotic and unbalanced generation. They are usually three stories high, with three more in the stepped gables, and the materials are generally brick with trimmings of cut stone, though wood was frequently used, particularly in Ypres, and always in the most consistent and joiner-like way. If there were no other test, you could always tell the work of a good period from that of a bad by the frankness in use of materials: brick is brick, stone is stone, and wood is wood, and there are no shams, imitations, or subterfuges anywhere. Whatever the land produces, that is used and made the most of, while the style of the time (mark, not the fashion of the hour or the fad of the school or the whim of the artist) is so modified as to adapt itself perfectly to these restrictions.

It is not until the Renaissance that the cult of deception comes in, and mutton masquerades as lamb, while silly columns and pediments are pasted on where there is no need and brick is plastered over to magnify the apparent opulence of the owner. It is at this same time that a mean individualism appears, and each builder tries to outface his neighbor. The Grande Place in Brus-

sels is a good example of this new selfishness, and for chaotic originality compares almost favourably with a city street of the nineteenth century. It is all very amusing, these rows of serrated slices, bedecked with mishandled "orders" and crested with miscellaneous gorgeousness on the lines of the sterns of the proud owner's still prouder galleons, and the result is engagingly theatrical and fantastic, but it is a grave commentary on a new civilisation that has lost in culture just in proportion as it has increased in efficiency.

It is dangerous to think too much about architecture—or any art for that matter. The thirteenth century was supreme in its achievement because it thought so much about religion and character and getting the really good things out of life that for reward it was actually inspired, and so probably thought as little about its art as it did about eugenics; being quite content to do the things it was impelled to do by an impulse for which it was not consciously responsible and which it made little effort to control. The Renaissance thought so much about art, as well as about its own thoughts (which didn't matter anyway), that even in its best work there is an opulent self-consciousness that defeats its own



ends and has issue at last in a self-conscious opulence that is the nadir of culture. These builders of Flanders and Brabant and Artois and Luxembourg and the Rhineland thought as little about art as their very different followers of the Middle Ages, and they certainly lacked the divine inspiration that made Reims superhuman, as St. Thomas Aquinas and Lionardo da Vinci and Shakespeare were superhuman, but the old instinct for beauty had not been burned and hammered out of them by coal and iron, or reversed into an unintelligible jargon (like the Lord's Prayer said backward) by an insolent intellectualism and a mordant secularism; and so, even when they used pseudo-Renaissance forms in their cheerful and humorous fashion, they managed to produce work that has a certain quality that the best-educated architect of this century of efficient training cannot contrive to obtain in spite of all his labours.

And in any town that had been left alone during the nineteenth century, particularly in Bruges, as well as in many of those the Prussians have destroyed, everything seems to fall into picturesque and beautiful compositions that are the despair of modern planners and "improvers" of

cities. Here again the results were quite unpremeditated. You cannot imagine the builders of the Gruuthûse in Bruges carefully arranging their effects of gables and turrets and mullioned windows with scrupulous regard to the soaring tower of Our Lady's Church; you cannot imagine the wealthy burghers who from time to time reared the varied structures along the canal and the Quai du Rosaire or in the Rue de l'Âne Âveugle (the names are as joyful as the architecture) or around the Pont du Béguinage, working studiously for their dramatic effects with square and triangle, tentative models, and perhaps the able advice of a "Landscape Architect" or a "Scenic Artist." If they had done this they might have produced a tolerable stage-setting or even a superior sort of world's fair, but they would not have built Bruges.

No, the conviction has been growing, and is now forced on us by a revealing war, that even in the seventeenth century there were those who possessed a civilisation and a culture beside which ours is a kind of raw barbarism; that they by force of this, and with the aid of a tradition of still greater days in the past, built by instinct as we cannot build by erudition; and that what-

ever issued from their hands was admirable and honourable and lastingly fair. It is well for us to remember sometimes when we amuse ourselves by discourse as to "inalienable rights of man," and that sort of thing, that there is one such over which no argument is possible, and that is the right to beauty in life and thought and environment, and that those who filched this from us during the century and a half just passed (and for the first time in history) were tyrants and robbers of the same stamp and degree as their immediate predecessors, who destroyed the other right of man to free and joyful labour as well as that to the genuine self-government and the sane and wholesome democracy that marked the Middle Ages and vanished with the despots and the dogmas of the Renaissance; not to return, so far as we ourselves can perceive of our own experience.

God grant we may retain what is still left us in Flanders and Brabant. If by the triumph of coal and iron either through war or (perhaps even worse) through the imposition on territories thus far spared of the ideals and methods of an efficient industrialism, we lose Bruges as we have lost Ypres and Arras and Malines and Termonde, as we had already lost, though in a

different way, Liège and Lille, Mons and Namur, then by so much (and it is very much) have we lost our hidden heaven that in the fulness of time we rely on for the lightening of the whole dull lump of our misguided and now discredited life.

## VIII

### COAL AND IRON

**A**CROSS the face of Europe stretched a great scar, even before the war; a scar that reached from Picardy and Artois across Brabant and the Rhineland far into Westphalia. It was an open wound, creeping gangrenously outward, and yearly involving more and more of what once was healthy and fair in its progressive putrefaction. It was an area of darkness that had taken the place of light; of burrowings far down in the earth where men (and women and children once) grubbed dully and breathlessly for poor wages on which to sustain life, life that was mostly the same dull grubbing above the surface as below. It was a place of warfare between an immemorial verdure of trees and flowers and grass, clear streams and pure air and, on the other hand, ever-growing heaps of slag and ashes and scoriæ, of fat smoke and noxious gases. In place of old churches and quiet monasteries, of farms and flocks and forests, of delicate châteaux and vine-clad old ruined castles, of sleepy towns, of winding streets full of

carved and gabled houses, grass-grown market-places, still canals under their arched bridges, ancient trees and forgotten gardens, with now and then a vast and mysterious church built out of many ages and crowded with old memories and the aroma of spent incense and vanished prayers—in place of this impractical, inefficient, and very admirable old land of a hundred years ago, had come a great noise, a greater activity, and a remarkable diminution of enduring results. The churches had been despoiled by the Huguenots, wrecked by the Revolutionists, and either sold for cash or restored out of pure delight in wickedness, coupled with a conceit that only accompanies the profoundest ignorance. Monstrous piles of brick, iron, and cement had blistered the land, while the woods and fields were scored and tangled by railway-lines, tram-lines, telegraph-lines. Machines everywhere, under and on and over the earth; noise, oil, gas, smoke, chemicals mingled in the making of a new civilisation, and the old was both forgotten and denied. It was a place where Efficiency was god, and his First Commandment was lawfully obeyed; where old virtues were transmuted through exaggeration and overemphasis into new sins, where souls shrivelled,

brains atrophied, manners ceased, that ten might amass wealth they could not use, at the expense of a thousand who had claimed only a competence.

A land of coal and iron, and of what coal and iron can produce. Not happiness, not character, not culture; neither philosophy, nor religion, nor art. Machines—appalling and ingenious complications of wheels and cogs and valves and pistons, that made more of their kind, together with unheard-of engines of death and mutilation. And factories—emplacements for machines that roared and vibrated endlessly, spinning, weaving, fabricating night and day, turning out what the world needs, but craftily fashioning it so it would not last, or what the world does not need, but that lasted only too long. Turning out wealth, ugliness, hatred, power, ignorance, and revolt. A land of coal and iron, black and potential as the first; hard, inhuman, irresistible as the last.

The Heart of Europe has produced many things in its time, dynasties, empires, crusades; religious energy, new philosophies, industrial revolutions, immortal art. Three eras have owed it much: that of Charlemagne, that of the Middle Ages, that of the Renaissance-Reformation. Perhaps,

after all, the latest is its greatest debtor, and for its culmination in that civilisation of irreligion, intellectualism, materialism, and unhampered force that is riding now for its fall, it may be that the self-destructive energy has issued from Lille, Maubeuge, and Charleville, from Liège and Charleroi, from Crefeld and Essen, Eschweiler and Elberfeld.

The Black Country of England, the southern counties of Wales; Pittsburgh, Chicago, Paterson, Lawrence, Manchester; cities innumerable in Great Britain and America, have joined in the great act of creating a new ideal and a new power, but the culmination that is its own antidote did not manifest itself there; instead it seems now to have developed in the raw scar across the face of Europe, and the malignant pustule that has burst at last formed itself at the far eastern end. Here, in the Rhineland and Westphalia, grew monstrously the wealth, the potency, and the material force that, made operative by the cold philosophy and the supreme efficiency of Prussia, have made possible, and even inevitable, the supreme attempt to bring to an end the outworn and discredited ideals and methods of ten centuries of Christian civilisation, and establish



in unquestioned supremacy the ideals and the methods that have fought hiddenly for dominion in Charleroi and Essen, in Leeds and Birmingham, in Pittsburgh, Chicago, and New York.

Coal and iron. When the first bituminous lump blazed unexpectedly on the hearth of the amazed cottager, the iron that had been man's servant for so long, stirred in its first waking to mastership, a mastery achieved at last, incredible in its degree, incredible in its potentiality. Creatures of its own, and allies brought into being before or since, but now taking a new force and applied with new motives, gunpowder, steam, electricity, join with it in plausibly offering their services as beneficent agents toward the annihilating of life; and, as agent and controller of the vast hegemony, wealth, desired above all things, powerful beyond all things, after many days "Lord of the World."

Nations and men have tried for world-mastery, time out of mind, relying on brute strength of muscle, on craft of brain, on indomitable will, and everlasting fear. Have tried and failed—after a little—and the empires of Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne, Louis, Philip, Napoleon have crumbled and become a memory. Failure

was inevitable for strength of arm, of brain, of will, was not, and could not be made, exclusive possession of any race or people, nor could terror be confined within territorial limits; in the end revolt; the rising of new tribes, intrusion of fear, weakness, degeneration amongst the victors, their ominous evanishment from amongst the conquered.

But how now, with these new aids, these untried forces and potentialities? Suppose that the unestimated energy of a million years, stored in the bowels of the earth, be applied to the dull iron and to the harnessing of the mysterious electrical force, under the stimulus of Will emancipated from the hampering influence of a discredited religion and a superstitious ethic; suppose a new demiurge be created, given supreme direction over soul and mind and body, and named Efficiency, and suppose for two generations the energy employed blindly and to no consistent end by dull nations, half-hearted in their devotion and still bound by the memory of dying creeds and moribund old morals, be applied by the highest and most self-sacrificing intelligence to the creation of a supreme, perfect, and absolutely coordinated engine that, at the well-conceived mo-

ment, shall be brought to bear without pity and without pause on the inferior nations of the globe. What then?

The answer is still withheld, for the trial is in process. It was a magnificent conception, and inevitable, for the great sequence of spiritual and material happenings that has followed from the first weakening of Christian civilisation and Catholic culture at the very beginning of the fourteenth century was bound to have issue in its logical and dramatic crest, and in the final test of its efficiency. There is nothing half-way in its effort, nothing indifferently accomplished or insecure at any point. Essen, Wilhelmshaven, Berlin have forgotten nothing, failed in nothing. Every material agency, potential on the earth and under, has been developed, harnessed, and applied; every hampering stumbling-block of an old righteousness, an old religion, an old philosophy is removed; coal, iron, steam, electricity, chemistry are built up into a great and puissant unity, made operative by the wealth they themselves have created and energised by the dynamic force of intensive intellect no longer hampered by fear of God or charity for man, or an ancient sense of honour that came out of feudalism, the Crusades, and a

Church that held the state in thrall and should have perished with the things she had made.

The mystery of the "Sin against the Holy Ghost," the mystery of "Antichrist" are mysteries no longer, but clear writings on an open page; blazing words on the walls of the banquet hall where the feast has broken up in sudden and searching terror.

Coal and iron. These territories are now the centres of greatest conflict: Poland, Galicia, and the Scar of Europe in the west. Each is the land of coal and iron. In the east the contest sweeps back and forth in Poland to rob Russia of her mines and manufactures, and add them to the resources of Germany; in the south to preserve to Austria the coal and iron and oil of Galicia; in the west to gain from France the coal and iron of Champagne, Artois, Picardy, as the coal and iron of Belgium were gained in the beginning at the price of paper treaties and a negligible honour, or to deprive Germany of the coal and iron that are the foundations of her empire (actual and potential) in the Rhineland and Westphalia. Was there any drama of Sophocles, Euripides, Shakespeare, Goethe that matched the sombre theatricalism of life itself? Here in the west, far back

in the Middle Ages, was the first great centre of manufacture and trade, Bruges, Ghent, Arras, great cities and world markets when London was a little river town, Paris a village, Berlin a frontier fort on the raw edge of a savage and heathen Prussia. Then later, after this first (and different) industrial civilisation had passed, came a new manifestation, and from Lille to Essen appeared the materialisation of a new madness, while Bruges and Courtrai and Aix were forgotten, with all they stood for, and other centres grew up—black, roaring, uncouth, but for men admirable and desired far beyond the restored churches and desecrated abbeys, the schools and universities, the dim and discredited philosophies, the decaying art and the vanished ideals of Fécamp and Reims, of Bruges and Louvain, of Aix and Trèves and Cologne. And now the Frankenstein monster gets him to his perfect work, and through the coal-fields and over the forges and factories, where he was fashioned, spreads death, devastation, and ruin that, nevertheless (and here the mystery and the wonder increase), may yet bring redemption, release, and restoration.

What has been in the immediate past needs no description: Crefeld and Lille are only Man-

chester and Pittsburgh, and their familiarity is sufficient to itself. What is now is equally common to all, and Louvain, Arras, and Reims in their blood-stained ruin are a part of the common consciousness. Meanwhile there were, and for the moment are, other cities and other regions, forgotten or endured, that are all Charleroi is not, or Crefeld or Maubeuge, and they are well worth a study, partly for what they are, partly for what they signify, partly for what they may forecast for a future beyond the present cataclysm.

There is hardly a more absorbingly interesting portion of France, historically, artistically, or picturesquely, than that wonderful quadrilateral, Compiègne-Noyon-Laon-Soissons, with its three great cathedrals; its finest castle ruin in France—Coucy, the pride of Enguerrand III—its fine old towns, as Laon and Noyon, with their groves and terraced paths; its great Forest of Compiègne; and only a few miles away on one hand or the other, châteaux such as Coucy and Ham, battlefields of the significance of Crécy. It is all fought over now and may be again; no one knows how much is left, or may be left by and by, but it was a fair land, with many traces of a more spacious

and balanced past, not in its great churches alone but as well in its quiet villages and its fine grey houses in old cities. A frontier, in a way, for already the creeping desolation of industrialism had reached close, working always down from the North of coal and iron, already absorbing St. Quentin and involving its ancient architecture in smoke and traffic, blotting out its streets of gabled houses, and turning it into a typical manufacturing centre—this, that was once the dowry of Mary Stuart.

North we enter into a general darkness, but on our way toward the dim old cities of Flanders and Brabant that hold even now the beauty of an elder day, forgotten by the world and outside the area of “great natural resources,” we may pause in spirit in Arras (it would not be well to be there in body, unless one were a soldier in the army of the Allies, when it would be perilous but touched with glory) for sight of an old, old city that gave a vision, better than almost any other in France, of what cities were in this region at the high-tide of the Renaissance. It is gone now, utterly, irremediably, and the ill work begun in the Revolution and continued under the empire, when the great and splendid Gothic cathedral

was sold and utterly destroyed, has been finished by Prussian shells.

Capital of Artois, it had a vivid and eventful history, reaching back to pre-Roman times, continuing under Baldwin of the Iron Arm, who became the first Count of Arras; then being halved between the Count of Flanders and the King of France; given by St. Louis to his brother Robert, passing to the Counts of Burgundy, reverting to Louis de Mâle of Flemish fame, abandoned to the Emperor, won back by France; then acquiring the sinister distinction of having produced Robespierre and, finally, coming now to its end at the hands of the German hosts. What Arras must have been before the Revolution we can only guess, but with its glorious cathedral, its Chapelle des Ardents, and its "Pyramid of the Holy Candle" added to its surviving town hall with its fantastically beautiful spire, and its miraculously preserved streets and squares lined with fancifully gabled and arcaded houses, it must have been a sanctuary of old delights. The cathedral was of all styles from the twelfth to the sixteenth century, while the chapel and the "pyramid," were models of mediæval art in its richest state. Both were destroyed by one Lebon,



a human demon and apostate priest, who organised a "terror" of his own in his city and has gone down to infamy for his pestilential crimes.

Both the destroyed monuments were votive offerings in gratitude to Our Lady for her miraculous intervention in the case of a fearful plague in the twelfth century, the instrument of preservation being a certain holy candle, the melted wax from which was effective in preserving the life of all it touched. The pyramid was a slender Gothic tabernacle and spire, ninety feet high, standing in the Petite Place, a masterpiece of carved and painted and gilded sculptures, unique of its kind. Every vestige has vanished except a few relics preserved, together with that most precious memorial, the blood-stained rochet of St. Thomas à Becket, in the modern cathedral which Berlin has just announced has been completely and intentionally destroyed by gun-fire.

Until its recent destruction, Arras was one of the few territorially French towns in this region that could and did take one back into the atmosphere of the pre-coal-and-iron era of Europe, though with a difference. The fine vigour and riotous life of the Renaissance, the gaiety and spontaneousness of mediævalism were gone, with

the colour and gold of the carved and painted shrines and houses, the fanciful costumes, the alert civic life; and instead was a grey shadow, a slowly dissolving memory. Still the pale simulacrum could stimulate the imagination, as the rose jar renews the memory of the rose. Now the jar is shattered and the scented leaves are trodden in the red mire, and we must make our way across the frontier if we are to find and enjoy what once Arras could in a measure give. God grant we may always be able to do so, and that Audenaarde and Tournai, Bruges and Malines, and Courtrai, with the still little villages in between, may remain to us after coal and iron have achieved their perfect work and been replaced in that position in life to which it pleased God to call them, so surrendering the more dominating place to which man had called them in his turn.

Of Ypres and Dixmude it is better to say little. Of the first of these, and its vanished glory, the solemn and single great Cloth Hall, I have said an inadequate something, but there was also St. Martin's, once a cathedral, with its delicate type of Gothic, its rich Renaissance woodwork, its tombs and screens and treasures of ecclesiastical art; there were its old guild-houses and its quaint

dwellings, carved and gabled and with wonderful old brickwork. And in Dixmude, there was the Church of St. Nicholas with its jubé, or rood-loft, as gorgeous a piece of flamboyant art as one could find anywhere in Belgium or France. All this is gone, but a little farther on, behind the present battle lines, are more wonderful cities still—or are at this writing, in July, 1915.

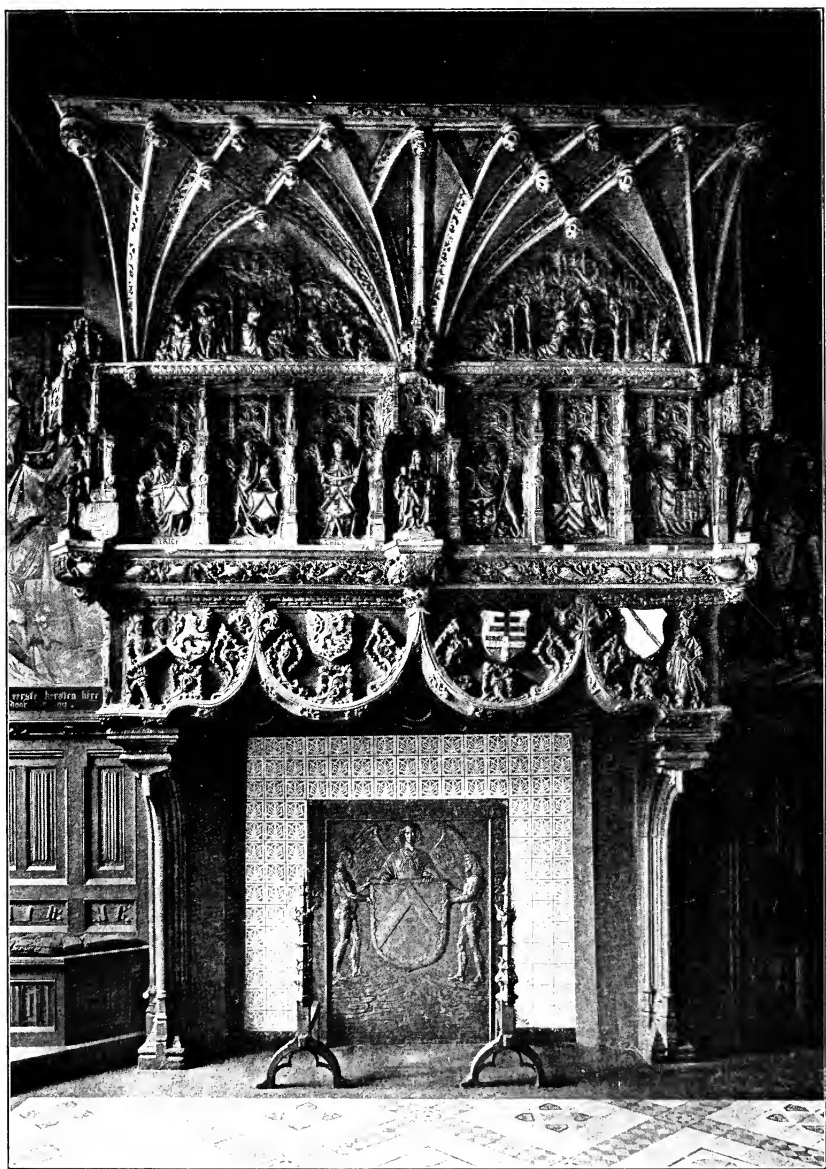
This little Flanders, from the Scheldt to the sea, was a veritable garden of dreams. Nieuport, Furnes, Ypres, Dixmude, Courtrai, Tournai, Bruges, Ghent, Audenaarde—all are haunted by infinite old memories, and most of them have preserved their souls through seclusion and commercial oblivion, but around and between lie endless little villages of delicate old houses, grey Gothic churches that have not been secularised or abandoned (for Flanders always was a Catholic country), gardens, slow canals and brooks under their low stone bridges, and an ingratiating quiet that gives the lie to the progressive, practical, efficient, and wealthy strip of inordinate activity that “disquieteth itself in vain” from Lille to Liège through Mons and Courcelles, Charleroi and Namur.

As the old names come forward again in rumours

and reports from the front, in death lists and hideous narratives of outrage and destruction, indestructible memories, dormant for thirty years, take form and shape again, and daily the gentle charm of a forgotten land becomes living, and the dull fear of an unpredicable and sinister future grows more ominous and intense. There is no other land quite like it; no place where the old has been spared by the new to such a degree, and where the old has remained so altogether lovely.

Of course Bruges is the Holy of Holies in this sanctuary of lost ideals, but on the way stop to consider the outer ring of a better kind of fortresses that circle her inner citadel.

Nieuport, Dixmude, and Ypres once held their stations from the sea to the Lys, but their ramparts and bastions were not proof against the siege-guns of Essen and they have fallen. Next to the east and farther down the Lys, is Courtrai, under whose walls in 1302 was fought that battle of the burghers of Flanders against the French, when 1,200 of the flower of French knighthood, not to speak of the men-at-arms, were slain, and 600 golden spurs were gathered from the field and hung in triumph in the abbey church.



A CHIMNEY-PIECE FROM COURTRAI



Once a great city, Courtrai had recovered something of its ancient wealth and activity, but this had injured it less than one might suppose, and it was still a fair town, with many trees and gardens, and its air of pride in a fine past. There were many churches, confused in their sequent styles, but full of charm, with rich screens of Gothic lace work, old wall paintings, and in one—Notre Dame—Vandyck's "Elevation of the Cross," a great picture in every way. Then there was the Hôtel de Ville, late Gothic of the kind that lingered so long in Flanders after it had perished elsewhere, with sumptuous chimneypieces of fantastic carvings and crowded statues, and finally the matchless old bridge with its three round arches and its enormous towers at either end with their high extinguisher roofs; altogether a good old town, so self-respecting and sane that it could achieve a new prosperity without sacrificing its old ideals.

South of Courtrai lies Tournai, on either side the Scheldt, the last outpost of an old culture against a new civilisation, for beyond lies Le Borinage, the Great Scar, where none would venture unless under compulsion. Like Courtrai it holds its own bravely against coal and iron, pre-

serving its fine old buildings, and largely confining itself to its traditional weaving and embroidery, much of which is still the product of hand-loom and deft fingers. All day the black coal barges slide down the river, coming from the inner darkness to disappear in the outer darkness, leaving the city itself clean and sweet, but prosperous withal, and manifesting a tendency toward boulevards that prompts both regret and apprehension.

An ancient capital of the Meroviings, a great city in the fifteenth century, four times the size of such struggling communities as London, besieged from time to time by pretty much every state or faction of North Europe, Tournai is full of pregnant records of every age for fifteen centuries. Toward the end of the seventeenth century the grave of King Childebert himself was discovered, containing innumerable remains of royal vestments and regalia—three hundred golden bees from his dalmatic, medals, coins, portions of a sceptre, sword, axe, javelin, together with the great seal-ring of the King himself and, as well, vestiges of the skeleton and trappings of his war-horse, killed and buried with him. Unfortunately these precious relics were seized and taken to



Paris, where most of them were later stolen and never recovered. It was from the gold bees, however, that Napoleon derived his idea of substituting this emblem for the traditional lilies of France. Now the lilies are faded and the bees are dust, but a resurrection is possible for either, and out of the war one or the other may come to a new day—or will both yield to the Rampant Lion from a blood-stained and forever-glorious flag, blowing now, though in exile, amongst the banners of Europe, equal in dignity and first in honour?

The Cathedral of Our Lady of Tournai is far less known than its peculiar importance and its peculiar beauty demand. It is a curious accretion and plexus of styles, from the middle of the eleventh to the end of the fourteenth century, with an incongruous but beautiful rood-screen of the Renaissance. Cruciform, and of great size (425 feet in length), it has the apsidal transepts of the Rhenish style, each with its columned ambulatory; a central tower with high pointed roof, also Rhenish (and English) and, as well, four slim surrounding towers, two to each transept, as at Laon, where they are not all complete, and at Reims, where they never rose above the nave cor-

nice. All this is in a fine, strong, simple, round-arched transition style, far superior to anything on the Rhine, and at least equal to Noyon and Paris. The four tall towers are equal in size and general design, but run from a consistent Romanesque to a straightforward Gothic in detail, the effect being particularly vital and interesting. The enormous choir of late and very delicate mediæval design, having been begun in the last quarter of the thirteenth and finished in the middle of the fourteenth century, is one of the few Gothic things one regrets, for while it is very beautiful in itself, it has eliminated what was probably a strikingly effective Romanesque choir, while its towering mass crushes all the rest of the church and makes it a rather shapeless composition.

The cathedral has suffered constantly and at the hands of many kinds of unscrupulous vandals. The "Reformers" in the sixteenth century pilaged it and wrecked its gilded shrines and its ancient glass; the Revolutionists continued the dread work in the eighteenth century, and a hundred years later blundering efforts to reinforce it by crude masses of masonry were succeeded by equally blundering efforts at restoration. It has, however, preserved and gathered together many

treasures of Catholic art, including chasubles of St. Thomas à Becket, Flemish tapestries, ivory carvings, embroidered altar frontals, metal work, and mediæval missals.

There are many other fine old churches in Tournai—St. Jacques, St. Quentin, St. Nicholas, St. Brice—all with elements of interest, while the ancient Cloth Hall contains a most valuable collection of mediæval art-work of all kinds, and the older streets still preserve fine dwellings and guild-houses of the Middle Ages and early Renaissance.

Audenaarde is all old, and it lies some five and twenty miles down the slow-winding Scheldt on its roundabout and unhurried way to Ghent and Antwerp and the sea. Once also it was a great city, now it is a village of six or seven thousand souls, for it has fortunately never recovered its prosperity under the new and unhandsome conditions that marked the nineteenth century, as happened in the case of Brussels and Antwerp and Ghent. In earlier days it was famous, like Arras, for its tapestries, and many of those exquisite fifteenth-century masterpieces that are now exiled in alien museums where they do not belong, but where at least their value is appre-

ciated and estimated at almost their weight in gold, came from its looms. Tapestries are made here no more, nor in any other place, for their art was of a peculiar subtlety that, even if it finds appreciation amongst stray connoisseurs and curators, is as far beyond the powers of the present day and generation as the glass of Chartres or the sculptures of Reims. Linen and cotton weaving and the brewing of beer have taken the place of tapestries in Audenaarde, but the old town itself is little harmed thereby.

From the large and pious and opulent days of the later Middle Ages, there remain in Audenaarde a very splendid great hall and two equally great churches of rather unusual value. The hall is early sixteenth century, very rich and equally graceful, with a slender tower and spire, ending in a great crown as did the now-shattered tower of Arras. Its rooms are very splendid, with big carved chimneypieces of the most elaborate design, and with its small size and scrupulous detail it ranks with Bruges and Arras and in advance of the more ambitious creations of Brussels and Ghent.

The two remaining churches of Audenaarde, Ste. Walburga and Notre Dame, have much distinction and architectural value, particularly Notre

Dame, which was Cistercian and is a surprisingly pure example of the reserved and ascetic Gothic which always marked the buildings of this order—which it largely created as a matter of fact. Ste. Walburga is quite different, with its Romanesque choir of very modest proportions, its ambitious and overshadowing nave of the fifteenth century, and its unfinished transepts showing where the great scheme of rebuilding, undertaken when it was too late and religion was already a waning force, had been abandoned. There has been too much restoration in the case of all these works of admirable art, and the ancient atmosphere is pretty well gone, but they are noble still, in spite of the nervous and mechanical attentions of archæologists and architects and other well-meaning but misguided people.

## IX

### A TALE OF THREE CITIES

**S**TILL farther to the north, at the confluence of the Scheldt and the Lys, is Ghent, the proud and turbulent metropolis of the fifteenth century, the city-state that was so preposterously democratic it could never get along with its neighbours, nor even with itself; the city of De Coninck and Breidel and the Van Artevelde, of sudden and heroic courage, of irresponsible turnings from one side to the other, and a characteristic vacillation in public policy that kept it always in hot water and was in the end its undoing; the place of strange old churches and wonderful houses; the shrine of marvellous pictures and one of them perhaps, what it has been called, the greatest picture in the world.

To Ghent, over which lay for centuries the oblivion that came upon all the cities of Flanders after they lost their independence and fell into the hands of the unscrupulous princes and states of the Renaissance, one following another with

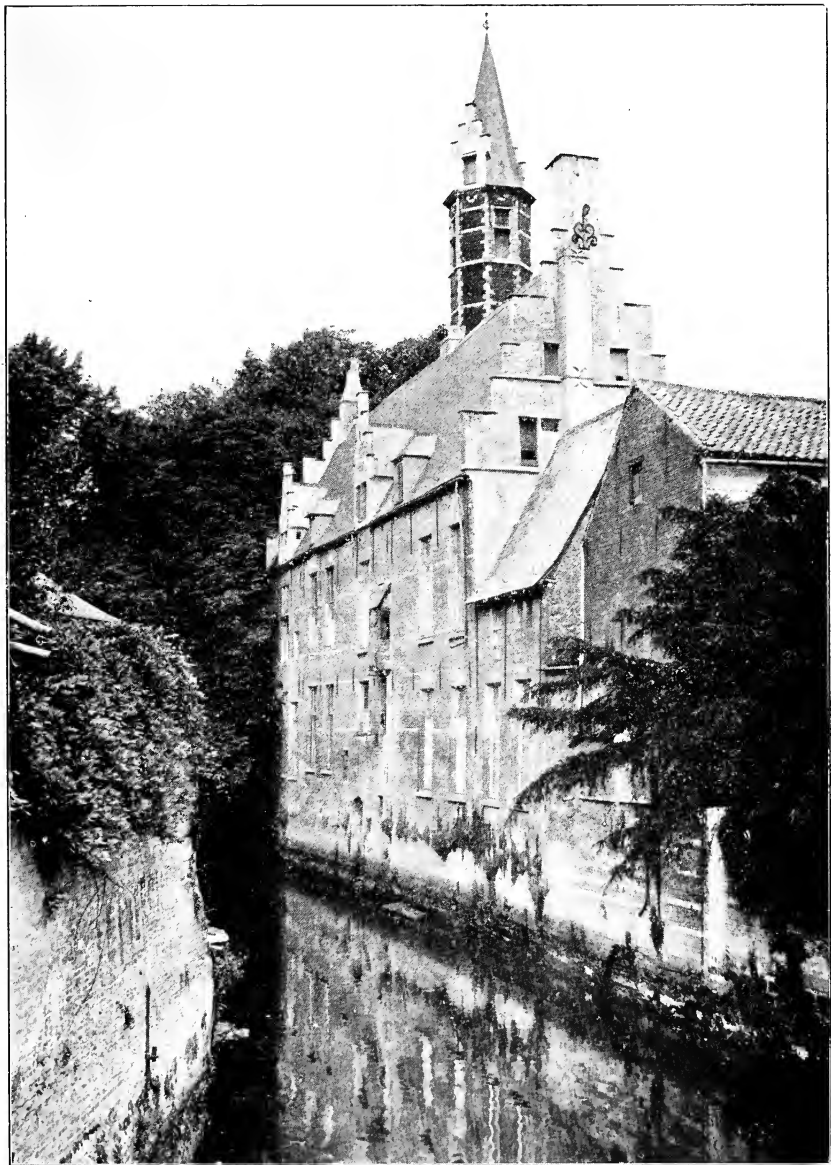
variety of oppression but no cessation thereof, has come a new vitality. It is as great a city now as then, counting a population of well over 200,000, while Bruges has no more than a quarter of this number. Providentially, it has suffered less than might have been feared by this accession of prosperity; its wonderful churches and tall towers, its quays with their serried lines of high gabled houses, its great castle of the Counts of Flanders, its winding streets and tortuous canals lined with ancient and lovely dwellings and spanned by little stone bridges, all tell even now for almost their full value; and though the city is quite metropolitan in its cleanness and well-being, with fine new streets and bridges and shops, the spell of a great antiquity is over it, and the new follows the old with conscientious effort and delightful delicacy of feeling. If an old city must gain a new lease of life, let it be after the fashion of Ghent.

Here is an old treasure-house full of wonders, and it can be touched upon lightly, if at all, for it demands a volume to itself. It has a dozen churches, all of the deepest interest; the Cathedral of St. Bavon, St. Nicholas, St. Michael, St. Jacques, standing to the front. All suffered

from the Protestants and the French Revolution, and some from the mishandling of restorers, but they retain their individuality, which is very marked, for one and all are very local variants of the styles one finds elsewhere; they are of Ghent and of no other place. Brick is used widely, as elsewhere in Flanders, either by itself or mingled with stone; and it is used with that intelligence, so rare in modern times, that indicates the possibility of adapting a style to the materials through which it is expressed. Of course, then art was as living a thing as religion and the realities of liberty, whereas now they all fall in the category of those fictions that please while they do not persuade—which makes all the difference in the world. All Flanders is a lesson in the use of brick, and as it is used here in St. Nicholas, and in the houses of the Quai aux Herbes, as it was used in lost Louvain, in desolated Ypres, in battered Malines, it was a study in good art, a lesson in the history of human culture, a demonstration of the perfect adaptation of modest means to a very noble end.

Ghent must have been a city of indescribable beauty about the middle of the sixteenth century before its dark days began and one scourge after





A CANAL IN MALINES



another followed the Reformers with their combination of dull brutality, insane self-sufficiency, and savage fury of destruction. Even now the group of towers, St. Bavon, St. Nicholas, and the belfry with its "Great Bell Roland"—though the original spires are gone and the belfry has further suffered the indignity of an extinguisher cap of iron—gives some faint idea of what must have been before coal and iron came, first to destroy and then most hideously to re-create. So also does the towering old castle give a hint, whether you see it from the Place Ste. Pharaïlde or from the canal, with its great buttresses lifting out of the water; so does the unfinished but sumptuous Hôtel de Ville with its fretted bays and balconied turrets; so do the beautiful ruins of the ancient abbey shrouded in vines and trees. Life in a mediæval city such as this could have left little to be desired so far as beauty of environment was concerned, and when this contained within itself unspoliated, unrestored churches that were in use all the time and meant something besides a seventh-day respectability, and a great bell in a tall tower, around whose rim were the words, "My name is Roland. When I toll there is fire; when I ring there is victory in Flanders," it is

easy to see how men could and did paint such pictures as "The Adoration of the Lamb That Was Slain."

This, with the other great pictures in Flanders, will be considered in another chapter. It is the central art-treasure of the cathedral, the pride of the Netherlands, and one of the wonders of painting of the world.

Past tragic Termonde—a name and a deed never to be forgotten so long as history endures—now only a desert of broken walls and a place of unquiet ghosts, the Scheldt goes down to Antwerp, the last of the inner circle of impotent defences of the eternal things that cannot resist, against the passing things that are omnipotent during their little day. In the sixteenth century it was the greatest and richest city in Europe; now, with its 400,000 inhabitants, it is double its former size but numerically counts for little beside the insane aggregations that call themselves cities and are the work of the last century of misdirected and evanescent energy. Its greatness culminated in 1550, and then came the sequence of catastrophes that reduced it to material insignificance for three hundred years, the Protestant Reformation, with its savage destruction in 1566 of churches

and monasteries, and of what they stood for as well; the Spanish occupation, with Alva's enormities in 1576, when the more industrious and able citizens were driven into England, and the city itself burned; the winning away by the Dutch of its old command of commerce; the closing of the river by the Peace of Westphalia, and finally the devastating storm of the French Revolution which destroyed pretty much of anything that had been left. By this time the population had fallen to 40,000, but under Napoleon a short-lived recovery began, which was brought to an end by the revolution of 1830, and it was not until the middle of the century that a more lasting development was initiated.

Antwerp is a good enough modern town, as these go, but its disasters have robbed it of all its ancient quality, and even the cathedral has the air of being out of place. Great as it is, it is not a masterpiece, or even an exemplar of its many Gothic variants at their best. Its unusual width and number of aisles, its great height and its forest of columns give a certain impressiveness and a very beautiful play of light and shade, while its single tower is quite wonderful in its slender grace and its intricate and delicate scaf-

folding. Its one famous picture is the over-praised "Descent from the Cross" of Rubens, painted while he was under Italian influence and therefore, if quite uncharacteristic, nobler and more self-contained than the products of his maturity when he had become wholly himself.

There are one or two other churches of fragmentary value, the unique museum made out of the old dwelling and printing-office of Christopher Plantin, with its stores of mediæval and Renaissance industrial art, and the Royal Museum where there are more admirable examples of the painting of Flanders, Brabant, and the Netherlands than are to be found gathered together in any other one place. For critical, or in a limited way, artistic study, this hoarding together, cheek by jowl, of innumerable works of art collected from desecrated churches and ruined monasteries, has its uses, but no one of the pictures torn from its original and intended surroundings tells for its full value. One wonders sometimes whether a daily newspaper, a school of fine arts, or a picture-gallery is the most biting indictment of contemporary culture and artistic sense; certainly whatever the answer, the picture-gallery

presents powerful claims that are not lightly to be disregarded.

So, from the dunes of the North Sea around to the wide estuary of the Scheldt, the ring of defences is complete, and in the midst like a citadel lies Bruges, the Dream City, preserving, guarding, and reverencing its dreams.

I knew Bruges first in 1886 when I seem to remember its old walls, when its new buildings were few and unobjectionable, and when the tourist—English, German, American—was as much of a novelty as he was an anachronism. I am told now that the walls have gone, and the boulevards and architects' buildings, and the tourists have come in; have come in hosts, with all their destructive possibilities, but I can think only of the old Bruges, still, meditative, serene; a town Maxfield Parish might have designed, but impossible elsewhere except as a survival, by some providential miracle of beneficence, from the heart of the Middle Ages.

This is not to say that Bruges has survived intact. Hurlled into the midst of the maelstrom of chaos that characterised the Renaissance in all its political aspects, she was ruined utterly between Maximilian of Austria, the Calvinists, and the

Duke of Alva. War and pillage, massacre, bribery, treason, the rack marked the advance in culture and civilisation beyond the dark days of mediævalism. What the Austrian spared the Protestant devoured, while the Spaniard gleaned the crumbs that remained. Bruges, that great city, proud, rich, and beautiful above all cities of the North, counted now a population of a scant 30,000, hopeless, abandoned, poverty-stricken.

The greatest ruin was wrought by one Balfour, a creature in the pay of William of Orange, who in 1578 captured the city and held it for six years, during which time the Catholic religion was prohibited, the bishop was imprisoned, all priests were either driven into exile or tortured and then burned at the stake, while churches were destroyed, turned into stables, sacked and desecrated, and more great pictures, statues, shrines, windows, sacred vessels, and vestments were destroyed than have been miraculously preserved. Every religious house in the vicinity was completely expunged, including the vast Cistercian monastery of Coxyde, the most glorious church in Flanders; and its wide-spread gardens, fields, and orchards regained from the dunes by centuries of labour, reverted to their original



estate, and desolation took the place of beneficent and hard-won fertility.

Out of this reign of terror came as some compensation the saving of Bruges—or what was left of it. In 1560 the Pope had made the city an episcopal see, on the urging of Philip II, and after Balfour had met a well-merited, but too sudden and merciful, death, the exiled and plundered orders took refuge within its walls, building new and humbler quarters for themselves and hospitals and almshouses for the miserable citizens. The Church took the place of commerce, and under its care some degree of life came back to the ruined city; and the quality it then took on, of a community of religious houses, institutions of charity and mercy, and old churches restored again to their proper uses, it has never lost.

Toward the end of the seventeenth and all through the eighteenth century the slow destruction of old beauty went on, though with a different impulse. Now it was the unescapable vandalism of ignorance and degraded taste that marked the time; old windows that had escaped the Calvinists were pulled out so that a better light might fall on a new altar, since it was “such an admirable imitation of marble,” even as hap-

pened in Chartres, where some of the matchless windows were contemptuously cast into a ditch to reveal the tawdry splendours of the lamentable high altar and imitation marble of the choir which represented the enlightened intelligence of the eighteenth-century canons. The sixteenth century was bad enough, but one wonders sometimes how any continental culture survived the eighteenth century.

Later, when the nineteenth century came to crown with perfect achievement the arduous but incomplete efforts of its predecessor, ugly and barbarous houses took the place of only too many of the beautiful works of the Middle Ages, and finally the wonderful old walls were ruthlessly razed to give place to silly boulevards. And in spite of it all Bruges survives, and more completely than any other city of the North, for it is farthest away from the kingdom of coal and iron, and if war passes it by, it may still remain an oasis, a sanctuary in the desert.

The beauty of Bruges is incomparable and unique. Threaded by winding canals, crossed by innumerable old stone bridges, where pink-and-grey walls, tall gables, spired turrets, leaning fronts of mullioned windows rise from old stone-

paved quays and garden walls hung with vines and backed by tree tops; cut by narrow streets of ancient houses, with old churches and convents and chapels on every hand and with slender towers lifting over quaint market-places and little squares and sudden gardens, it is a continuous and ever-varying and never-exhausting delight that, so far as I know, finds its rival only in Venice. A city that has shrunk a little within its walls is always more beautiful than one that has burst them and is steadily intruding into the fleeing countryside. That is the difference between the advance of man and that of nature. Ghent, Rome, Nuremberg are kernels of sweetness surrounded by a monstrously expanding rind that is exceeding bitter, but Carcassonne, Rothenburg, Siena, Bruges are so wholly different there is no possibility of comparison. When the houses of an old town seem to huddle a little more closely together, while superfluous walls fall away and the tide of green comes lapping on already moss-grown walls to cover and obliterate the traces man has left of his less successful efforts, then you have something approaching a perfect environment, particularly if, as here, there are innumerable and endless treasures of the best that man

can do, now carefully preserved, and growing better the nearer nature comes to touch them with her wand of magic.

Architecturally, Bruges is fifteenth century with a singular consistency—when it isn't of a century later or, and less conspicuously, of the fourteenth century; not that it matters much, it all hangs together because it is all of one mood and one impulse and one race. Its Hôtel de Ville, one of the perfect things in architecture, I have spoken of elsewhere; its churches, at least six of them, are each engaging in a different way, and each contains treasures of endless pictures, wood carving, metal work, vestments, gathered from ruined monasteries and churches to take the place of the greater treasures pillaged and destroyed by the Calvinists. Our Lady's Church, with its curiously beautiful tower and its gem-like porch; the cathedral with its ugly modern tower and its fine interior with all its pictures and treasures of "dinanderie"; the Chapel of the Holy Blood, still fantastic and charming in spite of its sufferings at the hands of the French Revolutionists; St. Jacques, St. Gilles, and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre with its noble tomb of Count Baldwin of Jerusalem and his wife.



THE BELFRY OF BRUGES



Then there are all the old guild-houses, hospitals, convents, monasteries, and the rows and rows of fine old dwellings, each a model of personal and curiously contented architectural art, but, after all, Bruges is not Bruges because of its single buildings, or all of them together, or because of its pictures and its metal work and wood carving. It is Bruges because of its unearthly beauty of canals and gardens, of endless sudden compositions of lovely forms and lines and silhouettes; because of its still atmosphere of old days and better ways, and because it is a place where religion no longer appears as an accessory but takes its place even in these modern times as a constant, daily, poignant, and personal influence.

Already this living charm had begun to exert itself over a wider and wider field, and when the war came there were more than 4,000 English and Americans who had taken up their residence there, drawn by its subtle charm and by what this stood for once, and stands for now. When the King is back in Brussels again, and real life begins once more, who knows but that the spirit of Bruges may find itself dominant over the spirit (has it a spirit?) of Charleroi, not only in Flan-

ders and Belgium and Europe, but throughout the world, for "the old order changeth, giving place to new," and the "new" is also, and unmistakably, the old, preserved as here in Bruges for better days, when through suffering and ruin man comes into his own again, and sees once more what is, what is not, worth while.

In Brabant were once other centres of old memories: Maastricht, Liège, Huy, and Namur; Dinant, Louvain, and Malines. None of them remains, for across Brabant runs the black scar that has transformed the cities of the Sambre and the Meuse into smoking anvils, where iron is hammered out into efficiency and coal is torn from the earth and burned in consuming fires to the same end; for across Brabant runs the red scar that efficiency has blazed like a trail of enduring flame, never to be forgotten or forgiven so long as man remains on earth; a portent and a horror to all generations *in sæcula sæculorum*. Dinant, Louvain, Malines; yes, and Tirlemont, Aerschot, Wavre and the innumerable other names that are uttered below the breath as signifying things that cannot be spoken but never will be forgotten, things that give one at last to understand the stern necessity of the once discredited, but



now grateful, doctrines of hell and of eternal damnation in the Christian scheme of the universe.

Dinant, whose fame in the fifteenth century for the making of wonderful works of art in metal, gave the name "dinanderie" to this admirable art—Dinant, crouched under the castle-crowned cliffs of the Meuse, with its quaint church, has gone now, and gone also is Louvain, all but its Hôtel de Ville which is more like a pyx or a reliquary, or some other work of "dinanderie," than a real building. The destruction of Louvain needs no description, for its fires have burned its story indelibly into human consciousness. We know only too well how its university was destroyed, with its priceless library and its ancient and unique manuscripts; how the great and beautiful Church of St. Pierre was swept by flames and left a hopeless ruin; how its streets were absorbed, one after another, in the roaring conflagration, covering with their débris the stains of massacre and pillage. Of Malines we know less, nor shall until the great cloud rolls back, but there was much there to lose, and some of this we know has been lost while more may follow. In spite of the altars to coal and iron outside the old cincture of the town, Malines itself was a

gentle and lovely old place, gathered around its great Church of St. Rombaut with its incredible tower. A town of old houses and still canals in strangely poetic combination, a little Bruges with a finer church than any the perfect Flemish city could boast. The church itself is of a vigorous type of the earliest fourteenth-century architecture, but the great tower, which was planned as the highest and most splendid spire in the world, though it completed only three hundred and twenty of its projected five hundred and fifty feet, is fifteenth century, and as perfect an example of late Gothic at its best as may be found anywhere in the world. It is really indescribable in its combination of majesty, brilliancy of design, and inconceivable intricacy of detail. The exuberance that marks the flamboyant art of France is here controlled and directed into the most excellent channels, and if ever it had been completed it must have taken its place as the most beautiful tower in the world. As it is, it ranks in its own way with the southern *flèche* of Chartres and Giotto's Tower in Florence, and more one cannot say.

Information is not forthcoming as to how far it already has been wrecked; it is said that the

glimmering pinnacles and niches of its amazing buttresses have suffered severely from shell-fire, and that its carillon, the finest in Belgium, has been destroyed; if nothing worse follows, the world may yet see its visionary spire take actual form at last, in the gratitude of a people for the passing from themselves, and from the world, of the shadow of death.

Inevitably, when one thinks of Malines, Louvain, Ypres, Arras, Soissons, Reims, there comes the suggestion of possible restorations, concretely expressed already by German savants and archæologists incapable of comprehending the difference between art and imitation, and as some palliation for the evils that have been done. It is a thought that must resolutely be put aside. As I said in speaking of Reims, if enough remains to be made habitable by simple patching and protection, let this be done by all means, but without a foot of false carving or glass or sculpture. Build other churches if you like, and as you must, and perhaps on the old general lines, though elsewhere, but let us have no more a Pierre-fond or a Mt. St. Michael. What is gone is gone irrevocably, and its shells and shards are too valuable in their eternal teaching to be obliterated

by well-meant schemes of rehabilitation. When a whole town passes, as Ypres and Louvain and Arras, then as it fell so let it lie. A kindly nature will slowly turn these bleak piles of fallen masonry into beautiful memorials, clothing them with grass and vines and flowers and trees. Let them stand so for ever, a memorial to the dead and a warning to man in his pride of life and insolence of will; and for the new cities, let them rise as beautifully as may be alongside, but not over, the graves of a dead era. Glastonbury and Jumièges, in their solemn and noble ruin, tell their story to ears that at last are disposed to listen, and the story of Reims and Louvain, with the same moral at its end, must be told eternally after the same fashion.

## X

### MARGARET OF MALINES

THE historians always call her Marguerite of Austria, but this is hardly fair, for even if she were a daughter of the Hapsburg Emperor Maximilian she did not come into her own until she took up her residence in a beautiful castle in Malines and made that own the fortune and the destinies and the happiness of the Flemish people who had been given her. On both her father's side and her mother's she was English, if you go back far enough, her great, great, great-grandfather having been that "John of Gaunt (Ghent), time-honoured Lancaster" of whom we have heard before. Her mother, Mary of Burgundy, who died when she was a baby, traced her line back through Charles the Bold and Isabella of Bourbon to John of Gaunt's daughter, Philippa, who married John I of Portugal; and it is through Philippa's son Eduard and his daughter Eleanor who married Maximilian's father, the Emperor Frederick III, that the strain comes on the father's

side. So "Margaret of Malines" let her be; and as well the well-beloved Regent of Flanders, for never, even in the great days of great kings and governors, was there ever a better sovereign or a more engaging lady.

The Middle Ages are as full of lovable and admirable women as the Renaissance is of sinister and regrettable representatives of the same sex. They had no votes and they claimed no rights; they were less welcome at birth than princes, and they were incontinently (and often prodigally) married off without a "by your leave" by their scheming fathers. Wholly subservient both in principle and in law, they were anything but this in fact, and a study of the Middle Ages reveals a certain feminine dominance that is startling to the male of to-day. It is well to remember that the clinging type, with the ringlets and facile emotions and tears, is a product of modern civilisation; mediævalism knew nothing of it, and little of that even less attractive aspect that always becomes conspicuous when society is breaking down at the end of an era; a Catherine of Russia, while not without prototypes in the Middle Ages, would have been as anomalous then as a Blanche of Castile in the eighteenth century. Apparently,

the only conspicuous differences between the men and women of mediævalism were that the men did the fighting and most of the active or violent work, while the women directed their courses, corrected their mistakes, and built up their character and that of their children; and that the men confined themselves to the tactics while the women controlled the major strategy of the battle of life.

The glitter and the show remained with the men, the substance of power remained with the women, and as their vision is apt to be wider and more penetrating it is fortunate that this was so. Of course it was all a part of the very real supremacy of Christianity over all domains of activity, all phases of life and thought. As soon as its power began to lapse and old pagan theories came in with the Renaissance, while Our Lady and the saints were dethroned by the Reformation, the wholesome balance was overthrown and women slowly fell back to that earlier position where the only defence against male oppression was the power of sex, the result being those artificial barriers and differences, and the unwholesome bartering of bribes and promises and threats, that always have resulted, and al-

ways will, in a complete downfall of personal and social righteousness. The problem to-day is not how women are to get the ballot but how they are to regain their old mediæval equality (or supremacy if you like) without it. During mediævalism men were more masculine and women more feminine than ever before or since, and in all probability a good part of the ethical, cultural, and social success of the time was due to this fact and to the absence of artificial barriers that denied to demonstrated character and to proved capacity the opportunity of effective service.

Whenever you find a great man in mediæval history (or any other for that matter) *cherchez la femme*; ten to one you will find behind a St. Louis a mother like Blanche of Castile, or a guardian like Margaret of Austria behind a Charles V. Men try in vain to change the course of history by their own efforts; women always have the power to do this through the new generation they are nursing and educating, while the men are exhausting their energies in the fighting and the politics and the everlasting strenuousness that bring so many great things to pass that hardly last overnight. After all, so far anyway as the Middle Ages are concerned, it was the monks



and nuns at their endless prayers in chapel and cell and cloister, and the mothers in their tall towers and their walled gardens, with their children about them, that made the great and enduring things possible.

Margaret of Malines was as perfect a type of this consecrated womanhood as one could find in a year's delving in ancient history; in addition she was a particularly charming lady and a very great statesman. Moreover her twenty-three years of rule in the Netherlands cover a particularly significant and interesting period in the history of this country and the end of mediæval civilisation here when it had outlasted its career elsewhere in Europe, so we may try in a chapter to give some idea of society in the Heart of Europe, at exactly the moment when it was about to surrender to the anarchy that already was progressively dominant elsewhere.

Margaret was born on January 10, 1480, in Brussels. Her father, the Archduke Maximilian of Hapsburg, was apparently a kind of imperial Admirable Crichton—handsome, fearless, a gallant knight, a poet, painter, scholar, patron of all arts and letters, and as serenely conscious of his personal merits as they deserved. Her mother

was the beautiful Mary of Burgundy, daughter of the headlong and magnificent Charles the Bold and Isabel of Bourbon who, like Margaret's own mother, and her father's mother, Eleanor of Portugal, was one of those fine and beautiful characters with which mediæval history is so full. When the little Margaret was only two years old her radiant mother, who was adored by every one, was killed while hunting and Maximilian, who was heartbroken and quite frantic with grief, found his two children, Margaret and her brother Philip, seized by the somewhat aggressive burghers of Ghent on the ground that it was for the state, and not the father, to determine their education and their future. Louis XI of France was undoubtedly behind them, for he believed he saw his chance to devour Burgundy, and in the end he cleverly engineered the treaty of Arras whereby the small Margaret was affianced to his son Charles and taken to the French court to be properly educated, while Philip remained in Flanders to be reared as the burghers saw fit.

Fortunately, the old French spider, Louis XI, died almost as soon as Margaret reached Paris, and her education was undertaken by his daughter the Princess Anne, who became regent for the

Dauphin Charles and was another of those strong and righteous personalities of a time that already had almost exhausted itself by overproduction. Under her able direction the château of Amboise became a kind of "finishing school" for princesses, and here the small Margaret was subjected to a system of training that would stagger the present day. "On a foundation of strong religious principles hewn from the early fathers of the Church and the *Enseignements de Saint Louis*, she built up a moral and philosophic education with the help of the ancient philosophers, especially Plato as studied with the commentary of Boethius," maintaining a cloisteral simplicity of life and fighting affectation and pretence with an austere ardour that contrasts quaintly with the court life of the time. And all this just before the discovery of America and on the eve of the election of the Borgia, Alexander VI, to the Papacy!

In spite of her gorgeous betrothal to the poor little awkward and misshapen prince, the marriage was destined not to come off; political considerations intervened, and Charles married Anne, the heiress of Brittany, out of hand, and the Princess Margaret was unceremoniously returned to Flanders where she was received with enthusiasm

by her loyal if turbulent and irresponsible Flemings.

The situation was characteristically fifteenth century, which is to say impetuous and fantastic. Maximilian had just been made King of the Romans and heir to the Holy Roman Empire; he had ventured into the nest of unruly Flemings, been captured, and imprisoned for eleven weeks, to the scandal of Europe and of the Pope who put both Bruges and Ghent under the interdict. Maximilian won in the end by promising much and performing little, and then backed Brittany against France, intending to marry the little Princess Anne, but he lost both the battle and his coveted bride with her desirable territories, both being won by his prospective son-in-law Charles who at one blow threw over Margaret, and won the very lady her father had been striving to attain. Maximilian's irritation was perhaps excusable under the circumstances, but when he found no one who really cared to help him in a war against France he turned to schemes of a new crusade for driving the Turks out of Europe, consoled himself with a Sforza princess from Milan, and worked out a beautiful new scheme of a Spanish alliance by marrying his son Philip to

the Princess Juana and Margaret to the royal Infante, Don Juan. Margaret was now seventeen, and after Dona Juana had made her way to Flanders by sea, always in imminent danger of shipwreck, and married Prince Philip, she took the poor storm-tossed ladies-in-waiting back with her by the same uncomfortable route, producing for their edification, in the midst of the worst of the incessant tempests, her proposed epitaph which ran:

“Ci-gist Margot, la gentile demoiselle  
Qu’eut deux maris, et ci mourut pucelle.”

The epitaph was not needed, and Margaret reached Spain at last, where she was received with wild joy, at once becoming the idol of all who met her, from Queen Isabella down. The prince was of the same temper as herself, handsome, noble in character, learned, proficient in all the arts, and they were married the moment Lent was over, in the midst of a kind of frenzy of general joy and magnificence. This was on Easter Sunday, April 10, 1497; on October 4 the fairy prince was dead of the plague, dying as he had lived his brief life of nineteen years, a gentle and perfect knight, destroying the golden dreams of his people, breaking the heart of the

Queen, and leaving Margaret, heartbroken also, to await the birth of her child, who was born only to die after a single breath. The life of the girl-widow was despaired of, but she finally recovered, and in spite of the prayers of the sorrowing Queen and court, who had acquired a passionate affection for her, returned to Flanders, where her brother Philip, through a sequence of deaths in the royal family of Spain, had suddenly found his wife the heir to the vast and powerful kingdom. Margaret arrived in 1499 and two years later, again for political reasons (her spirited father now being interested in the conquest of Italy), was married to Duke Philibert of Savoy, Philibert le Beau, a figure of splendour, courage, learning, and beneficence; devoted to his people, to governmental and industrial reform, to the founding of schools, hospitals, monasteries. One looks aghast on the mortality of young and promising leaders at this particular time. They arise like splendid stars, they embody all the beneficent quality of the five centuries of mediævalism that already had come to an end; they have no kinship with the new type of the Renaissance then first showing itself—with a Henry VIII, a Francis I, a Philip II, an Alexander VI—and one by one they

are blotted out of the darkening heavens. Born out of due time, after the ending of an epoch of righteousness and beauty, they seem to be taken away from a world they could not save and that could only have been for them a misery and a disappointment, as it was for Margaret's baby nephew, Charles, who was destined to inherit the world in its chaotic desolation only to surrender it at last and seek refuge in the cloister.

So it was with this model of chivalry, Philibert the Beautiful; three years of ecstatic happiness were granted him and his duchess, Margaret, and then he also died, in the room in which he had been born, at Pont d'Ain, only twenty-four years before. Margaret withdrew at once from the world, cut off her great wealth of golden hair, and devoted herself to prayers and devotions, and to the building at Brou, in memory of the dead duke, of that matchless piece of architectural jewel work, the shrine that occupied the energies of the greatest artist-craftsmen in Europe for a period of twenty-five years. From every part of France, Flanders, Burgundy, Italy architects, painters, sculptors, glassmakers, wood-workers, craftsmen in metals were gathered together, and thus they laboured year after year, at first supervised by the

Duchess Margaret from an oratory she had built where she might divide her time between intercessions for the repose of the soul of her knight and superintendence of the building that was to immortalise his memory and form the place of sepulture for him, and for her when God willed. In the money of our time the cost of this shrine, small as it is, was over \$4,000,000, and it represented the ending of art as it marked the ending of a great epoch.

The peace and the withdrawal from the world the poor princess desired above everything were denied her. Two years after the death of the Duke of Savoy, Philip, the only son of Maximilian, brother of Margaret, husband of poor Dona Juana, who was destined to a life of madness, Philip, Archduke of Austria, regent of the Netherlands, King of Castile, another of the promising princes of Christendom, died at the age of twenty-eight, leaving five children, with another shortly to be born, and amongst them was the seven-year-old Charles, the heir of the world. At the solemn obsequies in the Cathedral of St. Rombaut in Malines (the same whose tower is now shattered by Prussian shells), at the end of the mass, the King-at-Arms of the Golden Fleece cast his baton





THE TOWER OF ST. ROMBAUT, MALINES



along the pavement and cried three times in a loud voice: "Le Roi est mort!" Raising it again he cried again: "Vive don Charles, par la grace Dieu, Archiduc d'Autrice, Prince des Espagnes!" and without a pause a herald continued, raising his great banner from the ground, "de Bourbon, de Lostric, et de Brabant"; and a second, "Comte de Flandres, d'Arethorys, de Bourgone, Palatin d'Haynault, de Hollande, de Zelande, de Namur, et de Zutphen!" and a third continued the long list, and a fourth, the last ending: "Marquis du Saint Empire, Seigneur de Frise, de Salins, et de Malines!"

So the future Lord of the World entered into his inheritance at the age of seven, and as always, without a murmur or a protest, Margaret left her oratory, turned from her slowly rising shrine, and went into Flanders to be guardian for the future Emperor, to train him for his task, and meantime to administer for him one of the most turbulent, if rich and beautiful, dominions of his patrimony.

Bruges and Ghent were too uncertain in their temper as the result of an uncontrolled guild system and its inevitable democracy, inorganic and chaotic. Moreover, Margaret herself had been educated in Malines by her grandmother, Mar-

garet of York, widow of Charles the Bold, so to Malines she came with four of her little nephews and nieces, and was received with great rejoicing, taking up her residence in a very splendid palace, the Hôtel de Savoy, portions of which still remain and are used as a Palais de Justice.

Malines in 1507 was a very different city from that of to-day; as we could have seen it a year ago with its narrow and winding streets, its fragments of old ruins, its little gabled houses, we loved it for its quaintness and its modest picturesqueness which formed a kind of foil to the vast tower of St. Rombaut, lifting like a truncated obelisk above a low plain. At the beginning of the sixteenth century it was, like the other great cities of Flanders and Brabant, a place of palaces and gardens, a courtly and splendid city, rich, busy, magnificent. In the night of the "Spanish Fury" in Antwerp it is of record that amongst other proud buildings, five hundred palaces of marble or chiselled stone were destroyed, and this gives some idea of the nature of the other cities that rivalled and exceeded Antwerp in magnificence. Malines, when the Duchess Margaret took up her abode there, was no village of dark and dirty little streets, but a city of palaces, far finer

than London, or even Paris, and a fitting residence for a princely court and for the future Emperor.

The new Regent made it more magnificent than ever; it was a time when five centuries of mediæval culture were blooming in beauty and great learning, and the beneficent qualities of the early, or Christian Renaissance, were uniting with all that had come from an epoch whose term had already arrived. In Italy the Renaissance had rotted into a poison, but the virus had penetrated only a little way into the veins of Europe. The Papacy was rotten to the core, the Medici were cloaking their pestilential tyranny and their glorification of material gain in the fine vesture of learning and æsthetics. Machiavelli was dethroning Christian ethics and substituting efficiency in its place, but the Christian Renaissance was still fighting its losing battle through Cardinal Cusa, Sir Thomas More, and Erasmus. Dürer, Holbein, Hans Sachs were giving a new glory to at least two of the arts in Germany, and as yet Luther was no more than a threat, Wolsey a rising star whose balefulness was not apparent, Calvin unheard of, Henry VIII a splendid prince shortly to be proclaimed "Defender of the Faith" he was so soon to cast down into the mire.

In the domains of Margaret of Malines the afterglow of Catholic culture was still golden and gracious, and while she defended the interests and the welfare of the principality she held in trust with a vigour and a persistency that threw into the shade the lesser abilities of her male predecessors, she made of her city a new centre of learning and righteousness. Here came Louis Vives and Adrian, Archbishop of Utrecht, later the Pope of a year who, had he lived, might have reformed the Church and made the Protestant Reformation innocuous; Erasmus of Rotterdam, that engaging character who could have matched and worsted Luther, and done his work better than he, had he possessed the sincerity and the consecration of a martyr; "Cornelius Agrippa," Massé, Everard, Molinet, Renacle de Florienne, and other lesser lights. Mabuse, Van Orley, Coxcie came as painters to produce the altarpieces and portraits desired by the Regent and her court; composers and musicians sought her patronage, for she had a passionate love for music of all sorts and wrote many poems and songs which they set after the fashion of the time. Her interest in architecture was intense, and she made Rombaut Keldermans her court architect, charg-

ing him amongst other things with the completion of the vast tower of the church of his namesaint, begun by his direct ancestor Jan in 1452. This was a famous family of master masons, Jan, with his brother André, Mathieu, Antoine, and later Antoine II, Rombaut, and Laurent. The designs for the completion of St. Rombaut's tower and also for a great Hôtel de Ville are still preserved, and in vision one can see them carried out by and by in a new and regenerated Malines under a new and regenerated civilisation. As a matter of fact, the stone for St. Rombaut's spire was already cut and on the ground when the fortunes of Flanders changed, and in 1582 it was all seized by the Prince of Orange, and carried away to build a new town at Willemstadt. During Margaret's regency, the great Cathedral of Ste. Gudule at Brussels was built, the good part of the Ghent Hôtel de Ville, the belfry of Bruges, the spire of Antwerp, as well as innumerable other great works that perished at the hands of the Spaniards, the Calvinists, and the French devils of the Revolution.

As a collector of books, pictures, works of art of all kinds she was indefatigable. In her own house, which was a true palace of art, were Van

Eycks, Memlings, Van der Weydens, Dierick Bouts, most of which succumbed long ago to ignorance and vandalism. There were priceless tapestries without end, sequences of six or more: The Life of Queen Esther, the Story of the Three Kings, of the Earthly Paradise, of Arcadia; La Cité des Dames, the History of the Cid, of Alexander, of St. Helena. An inventory of the palace art still exists and reads like a story out of the Arabian Nights; we here find catalogued wonderful carpets and rugs; armour inlaid with gold and silver; caskets, clocks, vases of precious metals, carved and engraved gems, precious marbles, jasper, ivory, alabaster, chalcedony; gold-and-silver plate set with precious stones. As for her private library it was a treasure-house and a student's sanctuary. There were one hundred and fifty vellum volumes illumined with colours and gold and bound in velvet, gilded leather, metal studded with gems; there were three editions of Aristotle, four of Livy, with the works of Ovid, Seneca, Cæsar. There was a large collection of theological and moral works, decretals and digests in Latin and French, the works of St. Augustine, Lives of Saints, Bibles, missals, breviaries, books of hours, Gospels, Testaments. Froissart was there, with

*Robtscutidant*



all the old Arthurian romances, as well as the "Golden Legend," "Le Livre de Tresor," "le Mirroir du Monde," "le Mirroir des Dames"; books on hunting, falconry, chess, fashions. All these were illumined manuscripts, but printing was already an industry, and what Margaret had in this line we can only guess, as this particular catalogue is gone.

It was in this wonderful palace, set in the midst of many other palaces in a rich and courtly city, where the streets were always full of the pageantry of the iridescent mingling of an ending mediævalism and an unfolding Renaissance, that Margaret lived for a quarter of a century, training the little princes and princesses, administering the very complicated affairs of her state, defending it against aggression, composing its internal differences, giving aid to the sick, the suffering, and the disquieted in mind and soul, conversing with the philosophers, poets, and theologians she had drawn from many sources, and all the time keeping architects, painters, sculptors, craftsmen busy in adding to the wealth of beauty already superabundant in the Netherlands.

Flanders and Brabant have always been for-

fortunate when women ruled in the place of men and never more so than under Margaret of Malines. She guarded with the most jealous care every just interest of her people, beating at the outset Henry VII of England in a diplomatic contest, but later refusing to marry the thrifty monarch ("They have tried to marry me three times, but my luck is bad."), bringing Charles of Guelders to rights, aiding in the defeat of France by her father and young Prince Henry of England at the Battle of the Spurs, but on the whole maintaining an unwonted peace.

Not for a thousand years had there been a time more momentous than the years of Margaret's regency; more complicated in its conflicting currents, more amazing in its possibilities and in the ideas that were brought forth. The Renaissance was in the saddle in Italy, riding the Church and society to their fall; in Germany Protestantism was claiming and fighting for the succession, while France was following Italy in its progressive corruption, England still standing firm behind her Channel cliffs that seemed so well to defend her against spiritual as well as physical invasion. All things were changing, a new era was establishing itself, but Maximilian was not

content to see the old depart without a struggle, nor was his son Charles when he succeeded him. In the voluminous correspondence that has been preserved between the Emperor and his Regent of the Netherlands there is an astounding letter which reveals the almost insane lengths to which the imagination could go in these overstimulated times; in it Maximilian confesses that he has a great scheme for the redemption of Europe and it is this: he, himself, is to be made a kind of coadjutor to the Pope (Julius II, then ill), whereupon he will surrender the Empire to his son Charles, and then when Julius shall die, be made Pope in his place, thus uniting all spiritual and temporal power in the persons of the Hapsburg father and son!

He wouldn't have made a bad Pope, this shrewd, crusading, idealistic Maximilian, certainly he would have been a better than the Alexander VI, Julius II, Leo X type then in vogue, and the vision of Maximilian in the chair of Peter, with Charles V the temporal lord of the world, is stimulating and provocative of speculation as to what might have happened. However, it all came to nothing; Julius recovered, and was succeeded in 1513 by Leo X, who reigned furiously for eight

years and then died, to be succeeded, not by Wolsey, who was exerting every diplomatic and pecuniary agency to gain the prize, not by a Cardinal of the Medici or the Colonna, but by an obscure recluse, Adrian, sometime Archbishop of Utrecht, a gentle professor at Louvain whom Maximilian had discovered and sent to Malines to help educate the future Charles V, and who had since been immured in Spain as Cardinal of Tortosa.

It was one of those kaleidoscopic phenomena that gave an exceeding vivacity to the age. Into the midst of a line of Popes distinguished for their highly developed and quite artificial taste, their rapacity and simony, their persistent nepotism and their serene profligacy, came suddenly a shy, ascetic student, pious, austere, and simple. Into the Vatican of an Alexander VI and Leo X he came with his old Flemish housekeeper, to the horror of the curia, and, we may believe, the sympathetic amusement of the angels. For a moment it seemed as though the ideal of Maximilian was to be attained by more orthodox methods. Adrian VI set himself to the task of reforming not alone the curia but the whole Church; to regenerate Catholicism on Catholic lines, defeat

Protestantism in its own field, restore peace to the world. Destiny, however, is not to be escaped; the world had busily made its bed and in it it was destined to lie. One by one each young and righteous prince had been taken away by death before he could set his lance in rest against the common enemy, and now the anomalous Pope was denied his self-appointed task. In less than two years he was dead, Clement VII reigned in his stead, and the world, having taken a long breath of relief, went on very much as before, to its inescapable destiny.

When he was fifteen years old Charles formally took over the government of the Netherlands and four years later he was elected to the Empire, becoming Charles V, but Margaret still remained at the head of the Council of Regency of the Netherlands. In the wars between the Emperor and Francis I, the Netherlands escaped as the fighting was elsewhere, and their peace and prosperity remained practically unbroken. In the end Margaret crowned her career by initiating and completing the "Ladies' Peace," which resulted in the treaty of Cambrai. Francis I had already been completely beaten by the Emperor, renouncing his claims over Flanders and Artois and

promising to keep the peace, but he promptly broke all his engagements and had to be beaten again, very thoroughly this time, with further disastrous results to the remains of Christian culture, for Clement VII had joined with Francis against the Empire, and Rome was stormed and sacked by the lawless troops of the Constable of Bourbon, unfortunately killed in the assault, amidst appalling scenes of murder, arson, and pillage, when untold wealth of ancient art was utterly destroyed. The whole war was a scandal on the name of decency and more than Margaret and the other decent women could bear, so she proposed to the Emperor that she should undertake to make peace, and actually succeeded in doing so, with the aid of Louise of Savoy, mother of King Francis, Marguerite of France, Queen of Navarre, and Marie of Luxembourg, Countess of Vendôme.

Margaret's work was apparently finished. All her brother's children had been guarded, educated, and married, Eleanore to the King of Portugal, Isabelle to the King of Denmark, Marie to the King of Hungary, while Ferdinand who had been educated in Spain had married Anne of Hungary and received from his brother, the Emperor, the

throne of Austria, to which were added Bohemia and Hungary after the great beating back of the Turks from Vienna in 1529, since King Louis, husband of Marie, had lost his life in the terrible disaster of the battle of Mohacs in 1526, when for the moment the Moslems had been victorious and had threatened all Europe from the field where 20,000 had laid down their lives in a vain attempt to stem the heathen tide.

As for her imperial nephew Charles, he was now the unquestioned head of the Holy Roman Empire and leader of Christendom; on February 24, 1530, he was solemnly crowned by the Pope, in Bologna, with the Iron Crown of Lombardy and the crown of Charlemagne. Peace of sorts, had settled on Europe, and it was a peace of Margaret's own making. The Lutheran heresy was sullen and threatening, but thus far there was no actual violence. There was a pause in the ominous progress of events, and tired, apprehensive Margaret determined to resign her charge to the Emperor, who was coming from his crowning to visit her in Malines, and retire to one of the convents she herself had founded. She had earned the peace she desired, and a greater peace, which was accorded her by the grace of God,

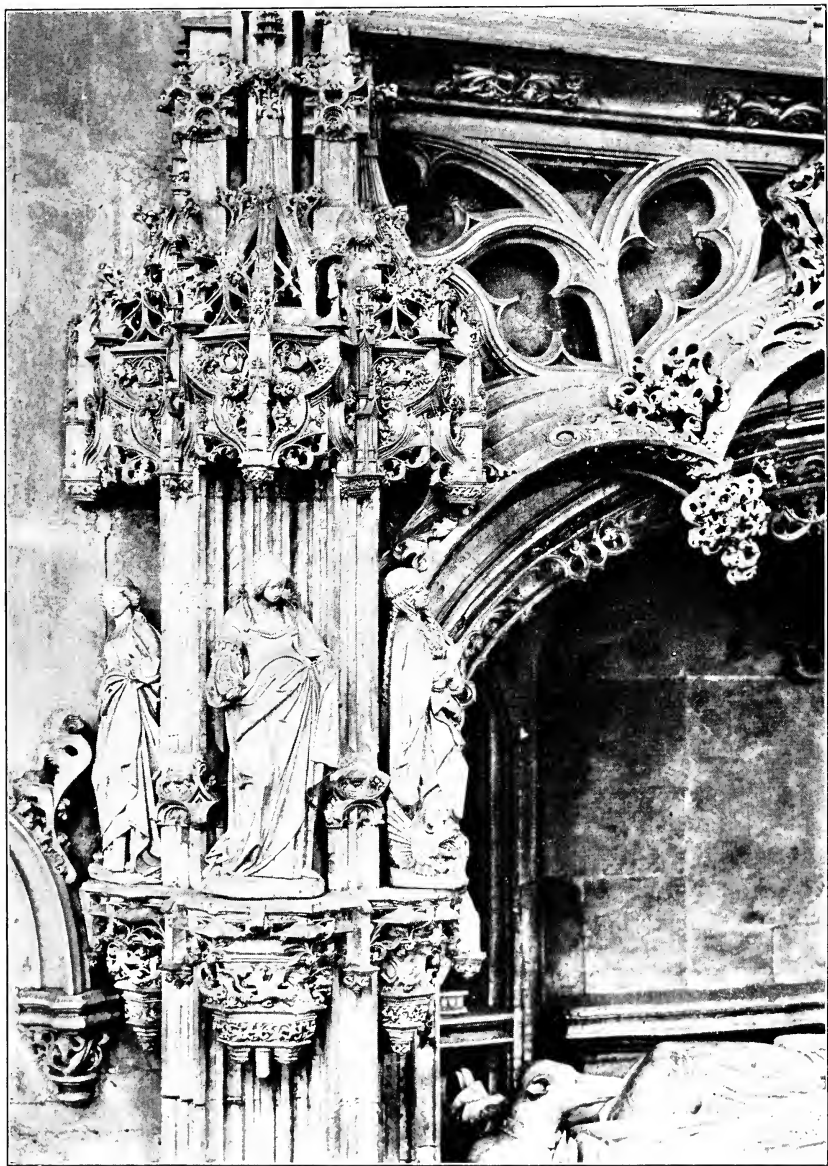
for on November 30, 1530, she died from an overdose of opium given her by her physicians in preparation for an operation that had become necessary, owing to an injury to a foot which had not been properly treated.

She died as she had lived, thoughtful for others, generous, meek in spirit, sincerely and devotedly a Catholic. All the Netherlands mourned for her as a righteous and able governor and, after the imposing funeral services in Bruges, she was carried through the snow, along the road she had followed on her wedding journey, thirty years before, to the church at Brou, where she was placed by the side of the husband, who had been hers for so few years, and for love of whom she had built the most beautiful shrine in Europe.

The church at Brou is the last of Gothic art, and Margaret of Austria, by the love of her people, Margaret of Malines, was the last of the great and righteous and pious women of the age that had made this art its own.

With the passing of Margaret, Malines ceased to be the capital of the Netherlands, but for compensation in some sort it was made an archbishopric; and though its great palaces have passed with its glory, the hoarded art and the





A DETAIL FROM THE CHURCH AT BROU



marvellous library of the Regent gone to feed the fires of sacrilege or enrich the galleries of the uttermost parts of the earth, though its wealth is no more and throngs of finely clad burghers and merchants no longer enrich its winding streets with the pageant of a wedded Mediævalism and Renaissance, out of this ecclesiastical aggrandisement has come in these later days a new honour to Malines; for when war and pillage again swept it with the flames of hell, it was the Cardinal of Malines, Archbishop Mercier, who dared to stand forth and defy the spoiler, while shaming his too-cautious ecclesiastical superior, weighing, vacillating, counting costs and profits in the midst of his buzzing curia.

The Heart of Europe, pierced by the sword and shedding the life-blood that had coursed for a thousand years through the arteries of the world, knew that the hour of the eternal question had come, that the clean division between right and wrong had been cut by the sword, that once more the Voice had gone forth: "He that is not with Me is against Me," and that there was no longer place on earth for the emasculate, the neuter, in the catchword parlance of the time, the neutral. Peter shuddered and hesitated on

the throne of the Fisherman; great nations outside the widening ring of fire counted the cost and dreamed day-dreams of arbitration and pacification, but once again Malines spoke, as in the past, with the tongue of the past—and of the future. Mercier of Malines spoke for God and his own people, and for the righteousness that is eternal, as four centuries ago spoke Margaret of Malines.

## XI

### THE FIFTEENTH-CENTURY PAINTERS

THE history, the principles, the motives, the methods of that mode of art which expresses itself in pictorial form are involved in more error and misrepresentation than happens in the case of any of its allies. For this the nineteenth century, and particularly the Teutonic nineteenth century, with its inability to understand art in any form save that of music, is chiefly responsible. Every effort has been made to isolate it as an independent form of art, to confine it to "easel painting" on panel or canvas, or to wall decorations conceived after the same fashion and on the same lines, to reduce it to certain schools and individuals and localities; in a word, to make it a highly specialised form of personal expression, like lyric poetry or theological heresy. This is to miss its essential character and deny its primary function.

Painting is the use of colour and the composition of lines and forms for sheer joy in this

particular kind of beauty; for the honouring of the most honourable things; for the stimulating of high and fine human emotion; for the symbolical (and therefore sacramental) expression of spiritual adventures and experiences that so far transcend the limitations of the material that they are not susceptible of intellectual manifestation. Painting is primarily and in its highest estate an ally and an aid of architecture, as are also sculpture and (in a less intimate degree) music, poetry, and the drama, all working together for the building up, under the inspiration of religion, of a great stimulus and a great expression. As a thing by itself it fails of half its power, but, like all the arts, it can be used in this way, though indifferently and only within certain limitations. To say, therefore, that painting as an art began with Giotto or Cimabue or Duccio, is absurd; there was great painting long before them, and some of it reached heights even they could not attain. Of course most of it is gone, vanishing with the destroyed or remodelled buildings, where it worked intimately with architecture, scraped off by "restorers," whitewashed by iconoclasts, done over by easel painters, so it is hard to judge it justly, but a few fragments remain in France and Italy

that give some idea of its original power and beauty.

Similarly, illumination is not a handicraft or an industrial art; it was frequently great art of a very distinguished quality, and so was the painting of carving and sculpture, an art not disdained by the Van Eycks themselves. From the earliest beginnings of the Middle Ages there was great painting, and the Duccios and Massaccios and Memlings only added to it certain different, and not always admirable, qualities, while devising novel methods that made possible novel modes of expression.

And here enters another misconception that has done much harm: the Van Eycks did not invent oil painting, if by the phrase is meant the oil painting of the nineteenth century. This, the use of mechanically ground pigments already mixed with an oil medium, is a trick hardly more than a century old, and is a time-saving device for the obtaining (which it does not succeed in doing), at the least expenditure of time and thought, of the effects originally produced by the old method that held from the time of Hubert Van Eyck down to that of Sir Joshua Reynolds. This old method consisted in dividing the work of a painter into

three stages—drawing, modelling, colouring—each of which had to be done laboriously and to perfection. After the picture had been drawn completely and in every detail it was modelled in a thick underpainting of impasto with its varied reliefs and textures, and then the colour was applied; successive coats of *transparent* pigment, one imposed on the other, each being allowed to dry before the next was put on. The result was, amongst other things, that depth, resonance, and transparency of colour that mark the great painting of the past and are absolutely unobtainable by the use of the opaque and muddy pigments squeezed out of collapsible tubes. In this earlier method there was no short road to success; a painter could not sweep in his broad masses of paint with a few masterly strokes, masking his lack of proficiency in drawing by daring and theatrical brush work, and making amends for his opaque and unbeautiful colour by a stunning exhibition of a delusive chiaroscuro. Everything was built up laboriously and conscientiously; it was consummate craftsmanship, with much in common with stained glass, orfèverie, and even with architecture. No wonder a painter's training frequently began with a goldsmith; it demanded the most exquisite and conscientious craft



and there was no substitute that a public trained in eye and quick in appreciation could be induced to accept. Temperament was no excuse for incapacity; daring brush work made no amends for lack of competence; for once painting was on a par with the other arts, and a painter was as much a master of craft, and as rigidly held to its highest standards, as a musician or a master builder.

Of course there always had been fresco-painting, and here the method was quite different, for the colour had to be applied swiftly and once for all to the wet plaster. Here the technique was direct and instantaneous, quite unlike that of panel painting, and though it was no more adaptable to the vagaries of temperamental expression, it opened up new possibilities of which painters were always trying to take advantage. Giotto himself, being the greatest master of this particular mode, was always working along these lines, and later Velasquez combined them with the possibilities inherent in the development of underpainting as a thing final in itself, without the laborious and studied glazing of successive coats of pure colour.

The art of painting was never a rigid and immobile system; every painter was striving for

new methods and new developments, and frequently finding them; in the end, as the old artistic sense died away, virtuosity took its place, and this found its opportunity through the elimination of all the old elements of craftsmanship and a development of the qualities of breadth and swiftness inherent in fresco-painting, together with the dash and bravura that offered themselves through the clever manipulation of the thick and solid and suave material of the old underpainting. In a word, the tendency was toward combining drawing, modelling, and colour in one process, obtaining final effects in one operation; and while this meant a possible slouching of drawing, a substitution of surprise and bravado for consistent modelling, a loss of all depth and resonance of colour, and the putting of a premium on such quite unimportant (and sometimes vicious) matters as dashing brush work, it must be admitted it did permit "temperament" to express itself with a swiftness and mobility impossible before, granting always that this is desirable.

Now in the working of this revolution the Van Eycks had no part whatever. They did not invent "oil painting" or anything like it. They

were the greatest painter-craftsmen ever known, and they and the generations that followed them in Flanders and Italy held faithfully to the old threefold mode of operation until Tintoretto, Velasquez, and Rubens began to merge the three in one and to lay the foundations for the present lamentable subterfuges of the Salon and the Royal Academy. What they did do was this: until Hubert's time every painter had been searching for some medium which would not mitigate the perfect transparency of their hand-ground colours and would dry quickly. All kinds of viscous things had been employed—white of egg, fig juice, and other less seemly media—but none was wholly satisfactory. Oil was the natural thing, but oil was an unconscionable time in drying. Hubert Van Eyck found some oil medium (or varnish) that dried quickly and this at once became the universal medium. It was a great discovery and a great boon, but it had nothing whatever to do with "oil painting," which did not actually come into existence until the dark days of the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, therefore the skirts of the Van Eycks are clear and we can absolve them of all responsibility.

There never was a school of such consummate craftsmanship as this of Flanders. The Van Eycks, Memling, Van der Weyden were the most perfectly trained, the most comprehensively competent, and the most conscientiously laborious artists ever known; also they understood drawing, composition, and lighting as no others ever did, while their sense of beauty of colour, either in itself or in subtle and splendid combinations, was unique. They were not portents, sudden meteors shooting across a dark sky, they simply continued and developed a long and glorious tradition. Long before them the monasteries had been producing great art of every kind—frescos, illuminations, stained glass, embroidery, painted sculpture—and it was all art of the greatest. When Hubert painted the “Adoration of the Lamb,” he merely gathered together all these arts and manifested his enormous and astounding synthesis in concentrated form, and better than any one had ever done before. All the intricate delicacy of jewel work, all the vivacity of clean-cut sculpture, all the suavity of silken needlework, all the flaming splendour of stained glass are brought together here in one astonishing combination, and to this era-making synthesis is added the living light





and the human appeal of the poignant beauty of the world, and the transcendent magic of the supernatural, sacramentally and visibly set forth.

This, which very well may be the greatest picture in the world (it does not matter), was ordered from Hubert Van Eyck when he was nearly fifty years old, he having been born about 1366 in the province of Limbourg and coming of a long line of painters. It was ordered by Jodocus Vyds, a worthy burgher of Ghent, as an altar-piece for a chapel he had built and endowed (according to the pious and admirable practice of those good Catholic times) in the Cathedral of St. Bavon. For ten years he worked at his masterpiece, and then death overtook him in the year 1426, when his work was only partly finished, when his brother, Jan, took it up and brought it to a triumphant conclusion in 1432. It is a great triptych of twenty-two painted panels and its preservation has been nothing short of miraculous. Philip II tried to carry it off in 1558, the Protestants to destroy it in 1566, and the Calvinists to give it away to Queen Elizabeth in 1578. It was nearly destroyed by fire in 1641, dismembered and packed away in 1781, carried off (parts of it) to Paris in 1794. In 1816 most of the wings were

sold to a shrewd dealer for \$20,000 and by him to the Berlin Museum for \$80,000; finally the Adam and Eve panels were taken to the Brussels Museum, and a set of copies attached to the mutilated remainder in the Cathedral of St. Bavon.

The work is one vast, comprehensive, and sacramental manifestation of the central Catholic sacrament of the mass, searching and final in its symbolism, consummate in its mastery of all the elements that enter into the make-up of a great work of pictorial and decorative art, unapproached and unapproachable in its splendour of living and radiant colour. In its philosophical grasp, its technical perfection, its unearthly beauty, its communication of the very essence of a fundamental mystery, and in its evocative power it staggers the imagination and takes its place amongst the few great works of man, in any category, which are so far beyond what seems possible of achievement that they rank as definitely super-human. So far as its spiritual content is concerned, it can no more be estimated than can the mass itself, or paraphrased in words than Chartres Cathedral or a Brahms symphony or the Venus of Melos. If the Van Eycks are responsible for this, they rank with St. Thomas Aquinas and



Shakespeare and Leonardo da Vinci as the greatest creative forces amongst men. Of course they were not, nor the others, named. Somehow each was used by something greater than he: the concentrated consciousness of his fellows, the underlying and informing time-spirit of an era—or why not God Himself?—as a channel through which and by which absolute truth was communicated to man who, of his own motion, can do much, but not so much as this.

For the consummate artistry, for the perfect sense of decoration and composition, the keen and exquisite line, the perception and recording of diversified character, the poignant love of all natural beauty and corresponding rejection of all ugliness, for the technique which is that of a master in the fashioning of precious metals and the cutting of priceless gems, for the colour that is now resonant with all the deep splendour of great music, now thin and aerial with all the delicacy of far horizons and misty forests at some pale dawn in a land of dreams—for all these things we may remember Hubert Van Eyck and his brother Jan, for this is their work, but beyond this we go elsewhere, at least as far as the mass itself, for the inspiration that has made this Flemish triptych

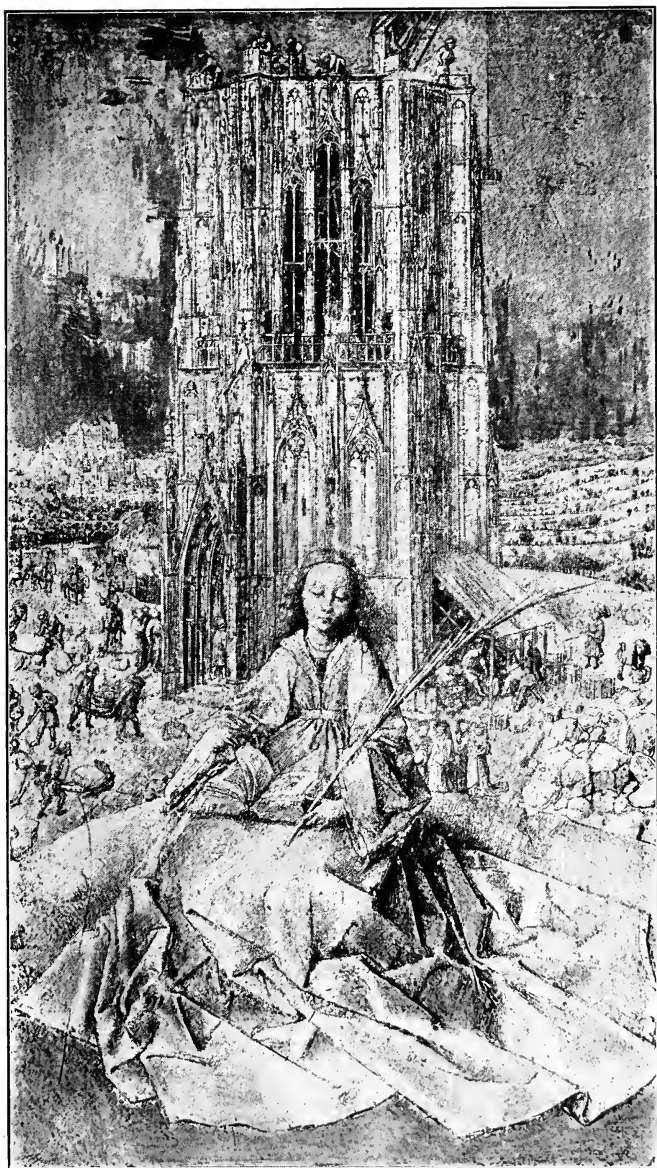
one of the great, revealing creations of the world.

The infinite variety of conception and rendition simply transcend experience. The three great, dominating figures—God the Father, Our Lady, and St. John Baptist—are of a Byzantine majesty transfused by a passionate humanism that is almost unique in any form. From them you pass to the central panel of the “Worship of the Lamb That Was Slain,” which is as tender and personal and human as the best of Fra Angelico, and, like his clear visions, irradiated by a kind of paradisaical glory that sets it in a heaven of its own; from this you go to the panels of singing angels and splendid attendant knights and marching pilgrims that are pages out of the daily record of life in proud and beautiful Bruges, and finally you come to the Adam and Eve who are sheer, unadulterated realism unapproachable in its minute veracity. Surely, these two men were a type of the universal genius. They balked at nothing and found nothing too difficult of accomplishment, simply because they were perfectly trained and broadly accomplished craftsmen who knew that theirs was an exacting and a jealous craft for which “temperament”—artistic or otherwise—was not, and could not be made, a substitute.

It is with a feeling almost of relief that we come down nearer the earth and confront the masterpieces of Jan Van Eyck. With Hubert we are taken into a kind of seventh heaven of mystical revelation; with his brother and those that follow we come back to what is more human, more in scale with experience. Great art still, as great as one can find elsewhere, and with all the mastery of methods, all the confident certainty, all the triumphant colour and the exquisite design and the faultless craftsmanship of the painted "Beatific Vision" itself. There once were many other pictures by Hubert Van Eyck, but all now are gone, destroyed by the savage hands of Calvinists and Revolutionaries, and the "Adoration of the Lamb" remains alone as an isolated miracle.

Jan was of another sort; equally great as a craftsman, he was a fine gentleman, a courtier, the friend of princes, and a diplomat. In those barbarous days before the culmination of the era of enlightenment, art was not a cult, isolated from life, nor were artists a sort of creature apart, made so by the possession of a then undiscovered and quite pathological affliction called the "artistic temperament." They were good citizens and an

integral part of a like-minded community, serving their kind after many fashions, amongst them being the honourable and admirable craft of art. Of this craft Jan was past master; he painted statues and illuminated missals and fashioned stained glass; he created great altar-pieces and produced living portraits of old ecclesiastics and worthy burghers and their wives; for all I know he was an architect as well—at all events he might have been, as is proved by the wonderful drawing of St. Barbara with its background of a great Gothic tower under construction. A thoroughly typical example of his painting is the St. Donatian altar-piece, a votive picture ordered by the excellent old Canon Van der Paele, who is shown in adoration before Our Lady and the Holy Child and attended by St. Donatian himself and St. George. Mr. Berenson could find no finer example than this of that “space composition” on which he rightly lays such stress; Holbein could paint no more exact and characteristic portraits; all the goldsmiths of Byzantium could not rival the jewel work of armour and orphreys, brocades and embroideries, and sculptures and inlays, while the colour, both in its individual parts and its composition, comes nearer the living light of the



A DRAWING OF ST. BARBARA, JAN VAN EYCK



windows of Chartres than any other painted colour in the world. One would like to hang this particular picture (for a time only, then replacing it over an altar where alone it belongs) in the midst of a "Rubens Gallery," or a room in the Luxembourg or the Royal Academy, and call all the world to see.

There is little enough left of Jan's work, and for the same humiliating reason that holds in the case of his brother. Of Hans Memling, another wonder child, there is fortunately much. When one catalogues the list of this earliest and greatest work in Flanders and recalls the wrecking with axe and torch of cathedrals, abbeys, convents, hospitals, châteaux by Calvinists and sans-culottes; the pyres of smouldering pictures, the ditches filled up with pulverised glass, shattered statues, illuminated missals and graduales and books of hours; the sacred vessels and gorgeous vestments, such as Hubert and Jan, Hans and Gerard showed in their pictures, despoiled of their splendid jewels (transferred for a consideration to Hebrew brokers) and melted down or used for chair covers, as the case may be; and when in this lurid light one weighs the thick hides and the muddled brains and the shrivelled souls

of the wreckers against even the mere artistic value of their spoils, one marvels still more at the wonders of scientific evolution and the promises of evolutionary philosophy.

Memling is the third of the great trio of Flemings, and though there were innumerable others whose art was near perfection, these three stand for ever by themselves apart. There is more of human tenderness in his work and a certain spiritualisation informing everything that gives a different quality; the portraiture and differentiation of character are possibly beyond what any other ever attained, but his composition as it gains in complexity and facile ease loses something of that broad and powerful directness, that supreme quality of rhythm and serenity that marked the Van Eycks. The colour also is less invariably sonorous, less pure and splendid and luminous both in its single tones and its harmonies, while now and then the universal Flemish passion for sumptuous stuffs and gorgeous patterns and glittering accessories betrays him into a loss of unity and balance. Still, any criticism is impudent; his St. Ursula series, his St. John Baptist, his St. Bertin and Floreins and Moreel altar-pieces are amongst the greatest pictures that





*From a photograph by Hanfstaengl*

A MEMLING ALTAR-PIECE



have been painted, while his portraits are pure life expressed through the terms of pure beauty.

It would be impossible to review all the work of all the great Flemings. Driven by the same impulse, each gave his own personality to all he did, and the sequence is as astonishing as it is priceless. Gerard, David, Roger Van der Weyden, Quentin Metsys, Dierick Bouts, Lucas Cranach, as well as numberless unknown whose work survives their contemporary fame, all reached their several heights of attainment on their own individual lines, and their pictures still remain in Bruges and Ghent, in Brussels and Antwerp (or remain to-day, in August, 1915) to bear witness to the full and vigorous life, the wholesome and happy religious devotion, the astonishing physical beauty of Flemish environment of those last years of the fifteenth century in Europe when the fair day of mediævalism came to its golden close.

Between this whole-souled art of the Middle Ages and that of the Renaissance came an intervening group that served to effect the necessary modulation from one key to quite another. Mabeuse, Van Orley, the younger Porbus, and the Breughels are the chief representatives and through

them one sees the old and masculine qualities dying away, the new and alien elements from the south entering in to take possession. When this transition was effected it was in Holland that it found its opportunity, and as the Dutch provinces are outside our consideration we need not consider here the products of a school that ranged in quality from Rubens to Rembrandt, from Frans Hals to Vermeer of Delft. The succession was broken, the torch (with whatever flame that remained) was passed from the Flemings to the Dutch, and only Vandyck appeared in the line of true Flemish descent to demonstrate the possibilities that still remained in spite of Rubens (and at the hands of his own pupil) for the development of a restrained and self-respecting and beautiful art, even though the moving spirit had been dissolved and the great tradition become no more than a memory. The great period of mediæval painting (for it was this in spirit and in truth) had begun and ended in this *Cor Cordium*, this Flemish concentration of the Heart of Europe. It had begun with the monkish illuminations of the fourteenth century, culminated in the great century from 1395, when Hubert Van Eyck began to paint, to 1494, when Memling died, and



*From a photograph by Hanfstaengl*

MADONNA AND CHILD WITH ST. LUKE, VAN DER WEYDEN



slowly disappeared under the influence of the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Spanish oppression; by the year 1600 it had ceased to exist, and the Renaissance, which had established itself in all secular and ecclesiastical matters, now took over art also for the purpose of developing its own exact expression. The five centuries of Catholic civilisation had come to an end.

## XII

### GOTHIC SCULPTURE

LONG before the days of the Pisani in Italy, who were erroneously held to have been the restorers of the lost art of sculpture, France had initiated and developed three great schools, one of which at least reached greater heights even than the later schools of Italy, even than Donatello and Michael Angelo if you test this art by the established principles of the greatest sculpture the world has ever known—that of Greece. These three were: The school of the south with Toulouse as a centre, the school of Burgundy, or Vezelay, and the school of the Île de France. The first is of the late eleventh century, the second of the twelfth, the third of the latter part of this century and the first half of the thirteenth. The earlier work south of the Loire is part Roman, part Byzantine, and it occasionally reaches, as at Moissac, a level of extraordinary decorative value, with, in its bas reliefs, a feeling for rhythmical line and space composition that are quite



astounding. In Burgundy, combined with great rudeness and an almost savage directness, there is far greater humanism, with much action and an unusual amount of character differentiation; much of the best work of this school is to be found at Autun and Vezelay. With the middle years of the twelfth century the sculpture of the Île de France seems suddenly to burst forth at St. Denis and Chartres like some miraculous happening. It was not this, but the result of many years of cumulative and progressive effort; but all that went before has perished, while fortunately some examples at St. Denis and a supreme collection at Chartres remain to give the impression of an unwonted and unheralded event. This sculpture of Chartres is more superbly architectural, more intimately a part of the whole artistic scheme than any other on record; all is formal, conventionalised; the figures are erect, rigid, immensely elongated; the multiplied fine lines and delicate zigzags of the drapery, the simple figure-modelling, the immobile, dispassionate faces, all show a most curious self-abnegation on the part of the sculptor and a profound conviction that both he and his art are only part of a greater whole, for they are purely architectural and in-

deed nothing but the architectural spirit expressing itself through an allied artistic mode. They are startlingly akin to archaic Greek work and, as Professor Moore has said of the sculpture from Delos: "One of these ancient Greek statues might, if wrought in French limestone and slightly modified in outline, stand in the west portal of Chartres without apparent lack of keeping." Yet there is manifestly no possible point of historical contact between the Hellenic and the French work, and the kinship simply shows the persistence of certain ways of looking at and feeling about things, and the inevitable if unconscious return of one generation to the ways of another, that form a commentary, both cruel and humorous, on the evolutionary philosophy current during the last century, and quite unjustifiably claiming descent from the innocent speculations of Darwin and Herbert Spencer.

Out of this sculpture of Chartres grew the very wonderful art of the thirteenth century, which gives a sorely diminished glory to the Cathedral of Paris and gave, a year ago, a still greater glory to that immortal group of churches now slowly crumbling under gun-fire. Very notable examples of the transition are at Senlis,

but they have been shockingly mutilated, and only one of the two wonderful carved lintels still gives much idea of its original beauty. The panel of the "Resurrection of the Virgin," has all the architectural form and the decorative sense of Chartres, but it has as well an added human quality that makes it enduringly vital and appealing. The same can be said of the surrounding statues and reliefs that are of the same period, and altogether the almost unique work at Senlis strikes a singularly happy balance, as sculptured architecture, between the rigid formalism of Chartres and Vezelay and the exquisite humanism and the almost too-surpassing art of Paris, Amiens, and Reims. But for the Revolution Senlis would not have stood so alone for sculptural art of the transition. Laon once possessed far more, and of an even higher type, but all the column figures of the west doors, and indeed practically all the free-standing statues, were then ruthlessly destroyed and those that have taken their places are merely modern assumptions. The tympana of the doors are original, though mutilated: the Coronation of the Virgin, scenes from her life, the Last Judgment; while in the archivolts and around the windows are remains of singularly

beautiful effigies of the wise and foolish virgins, the seven liberal arts, episodes from the lives of the saints. More or less of the original polychromatic decoration remains, and the statues themselves, even in their battered state, are marvels of art. Every trace of archaism and of uncertainty is gone, the sculptor works with a definiteness and a certainty of touch that are amazing, while his sense of the eternally sculptural is infallible. Every face—where a face remains—is brilliantly characterised; the poses are graceful, unaffected, constantly varied; the gestures are convincing, the stone quality never lost, while there is nothing outside Hellas—except Amiens and Reims—so faultless in its composition of drapery. From the very first this was one of the strong points in French sculpture; each artist strove for, and attained, not only distinction, but naturalism expressed through and by an almost classic formalism; the line composition, from Vezelay to Reims, is a succession of ever-waxing marvels. At Laon are even now mutilated figures that are as perfect in their composition of lines and masses as anything in Athens, and the same was true of Reims. Personally I have always thought of the figure work at Amiens



A HEAD, NOW DESTROYED, FROM REIMS



(apart from the bas reliefs) as less perfect in this respect, in spite of expert opinion, than that of Paris, Laon, and Reims; less brilliantly composed, more heavy and realistic, while the figures themselves are certainly not as slender and graceful, or so varied in pose. Moissac and Vezelay are hieratic abstractions, Chartres pure architecture, Soissons a breathing of divine life into ancient forms, but Laon and Paris and Reims are pure and perfect sculpture against which no criticism of any kind can be brought. Never has actual life been better expressed through the necessarily transforming modes of art than here; in these exquisite and rhythmical compositions the barbarous folly of the naturalistic and realistic schools of modern times is made cruelly apparent, and the base products of the average nineteenth-century practitioners (barring a few exceptions such as St. Gaudens at his best, as in the Rock Creek figure) become in comparison as absurd as do the shameless vulgarities of Bernini and his unhappy ilk.

There still remain at Laon many broken and headless fragments, and I do not know where anything can be found more complete in every sculptural quality. This is a great art at its

highest, and it shows, as Reims once showed, that in the early thirteenth century France possessed an art of sculpture that could take its place unashamed beside the best of the Parthenon. Usually one thinks of Gothic sculpture in the terms of that late fourteenth-century work so easily obtainable from venders of the remains of mediæval art, but this is of a time when a cold convention had killed the art itself; when the subtle curves of such matchless things as the statue of the Virgin from the north door of her church in Paris had been distorted into grotesque exaggeration; when the thin, close lines of drapery had coarsened into triangular spaces of meaningless upholstery, and the sensitive, spiritual faces of Reims had given place to fat attempts at a stolid pulchritude. This is not art but a trade, and it bears no earthly resemblance to the consummate work of a century earlier, when the art itself and the religion and the joy and the personal liberty behind it were very real things.

Chronologically, the next great sculpture of France is that of the Cathedral of Paris, but as I have arbitrarily excluded this city from the survey, since one must stop somewhere, while Paris requires a volume to itself, it is only necessary to



say that in spite of the devastations of man during six centuries, ending with the dull barbarity of the architect Sufflot, who hacked away the trumeau of the great central west door, together with a large section of the tympanum of the Last Judgment, in order to provide a more magnificent means of entrance for processions, enough still exists to show the singular mastery of the art. As for the statue of Our Lady on the north transept, it is one of the finest works of sculpture of any time or place, the perfection of the drapery finding rivals only in Greece. It is interesting to realise that this marvellous work antedates Niccolo Pisano by more than a century, so that if there still are those who search for the origins of sculpture after the great blank of the Dark Ages, they must forsake the Renaissance and Italy and find what they sought in France during the culmination of the Middle Ages.

At Amiens there is also, over the south portal, a figure of the Blessed Virgin, and while it is wholly different in spirit from that of Paris, it is almost as lovely and even more delicate and full of charm. Paris has the majesty and nobility of Michael Angelo, with nothing of his high but inopportune paganism, but this is like Mino da

Fiesole, with all his daintiness and sweetness of feeling, and added to this an almost playful humanism that is wonderfully appealing. "Le Beau Dieu" of Amiens, on the trumeau of the central west door, is almost in the class of the Paris Virgin and the sculpture of Reims, and is perhaps more nearly a satisfactory showing forth of Christ in human form than any other work of art in the world. The whole vast church is a pageant of carven figures—prophets, saints, apostles, kings, virtues and vices, symbolical characters, scenes from the Old and New Testaments, the lives of the saints, philosophy, romance—every tympanum is carved in bas relief, and the wall below the columns of the west portals is set with innumerable medallions of the signs of the zodiac and the labours of man. Never was there such an apotheosis of imagination, and only at Reims is there anything a degree finer as art. Even there the difference is mostly one of personal taste; if you like the lost marvels of Reims better than the miraculously preserved wonders of Amiens, well and good; it is for you to say, for both are matchless, each after its own kind. How the amazing array of carvings and statues at Amiens has survived passes the understanding; one would

have supposed that its spiritual emphasis, its priceless nature, and its singular beauty would have subjected it to the sequent attentions of Huguenots, Revolutionaries, and the nineteenth century, but all have passed it by; and even the Prussians in their brief occupation on their way to defeat at the Marne had no time to leave their mark. Now that Reims is gone, Amiens must remain (if it does remain) the great and crowning exemplar of Christian sculpture at its highest and most triumphant cresting of achievement.

It is hard to write of the sculptures of Reims, or of anything dead and foully mutilated. For generations the thousands of carved figures stood in their niches growing grey and weather-worn through the passing of years—neglected, unnoticed, despised—while silly effigies were turned out by incompetent bunglers to receive the laudation of the haunters of international expositions and the galleries of the Salon. Then suddenly a dim light showed itself and grew steadily brighter until at last, a year or two ago, the consciousness became sure that here was one of the very great things in the world, one of the few supreme products of man in his highest and most unfamiliar estate, priceless and unreplaceable, as the Par-

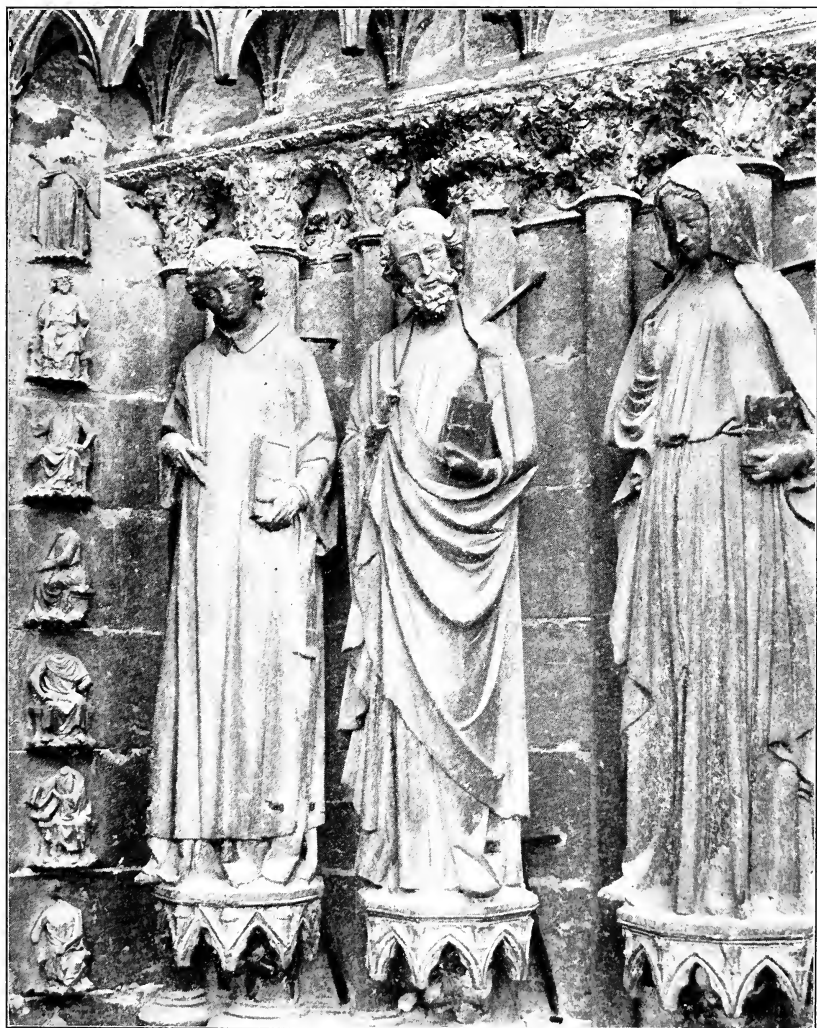
thenon or the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, or the plays of Shakespeare, or the music of Johann Sebastian Bach. And the long-delayed knowledge came to us only to be turned into a memory, the new possession was ours only to be taken away, and now nevermore for ever can it be granted to us to live in and with this perished art, for it is gone as utterly as the lost dramas of Sophocles, the burned library of Alexandria, the "Last Supper" of Leonardo da Vinci.

"The fool hath said in his heart, 'there is no God,'" and the fool hath said in his heart: "I am greater and more precious than silly works of art." What is the result of this insolence, the "Pomeranian grenadier" type of insolence that exalts an ignorant, degraded, useless hulk of dull flesh and blood over the supreme works of divinely inspired men? Under the lash of industrialism he can transform coal and iron into money values; he can fight for markets overseas where his masters can sell articles no man needs, to people who do not want them; he can beget children after his own kind, in their turn to do likewise, and finally—though this is not the appealing argument to the partisans of his essential superiority—he has an immortal soul he is doing his best to lose, and fre-

quently succeeding to admiration. Are the vile types that revealed themselves in rape and murder and mutilation in the undefended villages of Belgium, or those under whose orders they acted, more worth saving for further industry of the same nature than the "Worship of the Lamb" in Ghent or the sculptures of the northwest door of Reims? It is an easy argument to offer, the sanctity of human life, but it is not the motive behind the batteries on the hills to the east of the devastated capital of Champagne, month after month pouring shell on the greatest cathedral that the Christianity of the West has reared to the glory of God. The motive behind the batteries is an instinctive realisation that Reims is a record of human greatness to which the gunners and their masters cannot attain, a lasting reproach to inferiority, a sermon and a prayer, a menace to bloated self-sufficiency and to a baseless pride. Nobility engenders hate as well as reverence, the choice depends only on the nature of the man who confronts it, and there never has been a time in all history when decadence did not bring into existence a hatred of all fine and noble things that for very rage and resentment willed the destruction of the dumb accuser. Reims, and what Reims stood

for, cannot exist in the world together with their potent and efficient negation; therefore Reims perishes, as has perished at similar times in the past so much of the record in sublimity and beauty of that human superiority which is the silent accuser of all spiritual and ethical degeneration.

For the making of the west front of Reims all the great masters and craftsmen of France gathered together, and the sculpture showed not only greater excellence than may be found elsewhere, but a greater variety in genius and personality. It is not that in the doors of this façade were to be found great statues in conspicuous places with lesser work all around; every piece of sculpture or of carving was a masterpiece of its kind. High up in the gables, hidden in the shadows of the archivolts, forgotten in odd corners where only persistent search would reveal them, were little figures or isolated heads as carefully thought out and as finely felt as the august hierarchies of the front itself. Personality, varied, vital, distinguished, marked the sculpture of Reims, together with an unerring sense of beauty of formalised line, and an erudition, a familiarity with the Scriptures, with scholastic philosophy, with the



THREE DESTROYED FIGURES FROM REIMS





lives of the saints, and with the arts and sciences that would appear to do away with the quaint superstition that the Middle Ages were a time of intellectual ignorance. The men who carved these statues were not of the æsthetically elect; they were not a few highly trained, well-dressed, and supercilious specialists, working in the confidence born of years in Paris and Rome; they were stone-masons, members of their own self-respecting union, who had worked their way up a little higher than their fellows and so could carve each his group of statues to the satisfaction of bishop or abbot or master mason and—which was even more to the point—to his own satisfaction and in accordance with the jealous standards of excellence of his guild. He had to know what he was doing and what he had to express; there was no ubiquitous architect to instruct him, no “committee on symbolism” to show him the way, and so if he could not read well enough to enjoy a modern “yellow journal,” or write well enough to forge a name or draft a speculative prospectus, he did know far more about religion, theology, philosophy, history, and the contemporary sciences and arts and romances than the modern workman with his years of public school behind him, or

many an architect or sculptor with his high school, preparatory school, and university training behind him as well.

They knew and felt and enjoyed, these sculptors of Reims, whose work endured for six centuries and might have lasted six more. Perhaps the quality of enjoyment was more clearly expressed than anything else. Life was worth living to them and they made the most of it, and with much laughter. These carved figures at Reims and Amiens and Paris show in every line the good human joy of doing a thing well, just as so much of the output of so much of modern industrialism shows the dull indifference or the weary disgust for doing a thing ill. No sculptor then would have contented himself with making a clay model and a plaster cast and then turning the execution over to a gang of ignorant day-labourers working like banderlogs, only with the intelligent assistance of mechanical devices. The artist was the craftsman and the art was a craft, just as the craft was an art, and the work shows it all to those who still can see. Great work, the greatest work, if you like; but so far as Reims is concerned it is now fire-scorched débris, and for its loss we are consoled by the offer of—another

Sieges Allee, perhaps. The world may be forgiven for thinking that the game is not worth the candle.

During the Hundred Years' War sculpture in France froze into a sometimes pleasing but never very profitable convention; now and then it had great loveliness, as in the statues of the church at Brou, but generally it had those qualities of exaggeration, affectation, and insincerity to which I already have referred. Technically, it was always very perfect and sometimes the decorative design and the manipulation of the marble were almost Japanese in their curious delicacy. Toward the end of the century there is an improvement owing to the influence of Flanders, then prosperous and cultured while so much of the rest of Europe was spiritually and physically devastated by wars, but this later work seemed the particular detestation of the reformers, and mostly it is gone, particularly in the land of its origin, where reform followed by revolution left nothing intact that could be mutilated. Little of the work of the two great schools of Tournai and Burgundy remains, but there is enough to show that if the torch of sculptural art had passed in blood and flame from the hands of France, it had been seized by the

men of the Netherlands and carried on for two centuries at least with little diminution in its radiance. With the seventeenth century the flame was suddenly extinguished and afterward was nothing but that type of baroque absurdity that still disgraces the undevastated churches with preposterous marble screens and loud-mouthed, theatrical pulpits, and prancing images of heroic size stuck on the columns of nave and choir.

What the seventeenth century failed to accomplish in the line of these atrocities is scarcely worth doing; the grotesque insanity of the confessionals and pulpits and other woodwork of the time passes imagination, and is matched only by the misdirected ingenuity and facility of it all. The cathedral in Brussels; St. André at Antwerp; St. Martin, Ypres; St. Pierre, Louvain, were particularly hard hit, but there were few churches that did not boast at least a pulpit in a style of design that would have looked like a king's coach of state had it not more closely resembled a bandwagon. St. Gudule in Brussels suffered most of all, for it not only possesses a peculiarly irritating pulpit of most ridiculous design but its columns are disfigured by the impossible statues on grotesque brackets, while it is disgraced by some of

the very worst stained glass produced before the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when all past records were revised.

When one compares the tawdry horrors that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries blotted almost every church in Flanders and Brabant, and compares it, not with the consummate sculpture and decoration of the great era but even with such work of the undoubted decadence as the screens of Louvain and Lierre, the impossible gulf between the two civilisations becomes peculiarly conspicuous. When one realises further that the black-and-white-marble mortuary horrors in the way of screens in Bruges, Antwerp, and Ghent exist at the expense of such works of real, if unguarded, art as the screen at Lierre, destroyed to give place to their perfumed artifice, the annihilation of art that has followed its production with implacable steps takes on a new poignancy, and the continued destruction, now violently in process, becomes even less endurable than before.

## XIII

### THE ALLIED ARTS

THE debt of Europe to the region we are considering is as great in the case of the so-called "minor arts" as it is elsewhere. Even the language preserves the record: Arras has given its name to the tapestries for which it was famous, linen woven in regular patterns is called *diaper*, or "*linge d'Ypres*," *cambric* is simply the product of *Cambrai*, *gauntlet* preserves the fame of *Ghent* for its gloves, while the lost city of *Dinant* was once so famous for its work in copper, brass, bronze, and gilded metal that during the Middle Ages all products of this kind were called *dinanderie*. Tapestry weaving is, or was, an art essentially *Flemish*; illumination, if shared with *Italy* and in a measure every land where there were monks and monasteries, reached peculiarly notable heights in *Flanders*, *Brabant*, and *Champagne*; the casting of bells and the forming of them into *carillons* is peculiarly the province of this region, while metal work, whether of gold and silver, or of bronze and copper and brass,

was an art of distinction even from the time of Charlemagne.

It was he that was primarily responsible for the beginnings of many of these admirable arts. From his capital at Aix, where he had gathered all the art and learning he could glean from western Europe, went out the influences that persisted long beyond his day and that of his ill-fortuned dynasty. The Scandinavian tribes and the Celts of Gaul had always been craftsmen in metals, particularly bronze, and Charlemagne used them under the direction of his Roman and Byzantine artificers, developing an art that was neither one nor the other, but a new Christian mode of expression. When toward the close of the tenth century the young Princess Theophano came from the Bosphorus as the bride of Otho II, she brought with her other artists, with a treasure of Byzantine craftsmanship in weaving, metals, enamels, and ivory carving; and a new impulse was given, so that, under the direction of a crescent Christianity, a local and racial art developed along many lines and extended itself through the whole region and into France, Normandy, England, and Germany as well. From Aix, Archbishop Willigis and Bishop Bernward carried into

Germany the art of metal working as they had learned it, one to Mainz, the other to Hildesheim, where their works still remain. To Dinant, Huy, and Liège the same impulse was given that later extended through Brabant and Flanders. In France the beginnings seem to have been at the hands of St. Eloi at Limoges and Abbot Suger of St. Denis, but it was all within the area to which our attention is confined.

From the time of Charlemagne the production of works of art in precious and common metals was an ever-increasing industry, lapsing during the second Dark Ages, beginning with new and unexampled vigour with the great religious revival of the first years of the eleventh century. It is impossible to form an adequate estimate either of the magnitude of the product or the degree of concrete beauty that came in these many lines of art out of the Middle Ages. For five hundred years craftsmen were busy over all that is now Rhenish Prussia, Holland, Belgium, France, and England, with the Scandinavian countries, Italy, and Spain in only a less degree, in producing an infinite number of exquisite things for an infinite number of churches; metal work of every kind and for every conceivable purpose—sacred vessels,



crosses, crosiers, reliquaries, shrines, tombs, and screens; woven tapestries to hang the walls of châteaux and cathedrals; embroidered and jewelled vestments for an unending series of bishops, priests, altars; illuminated volumes whose every vellum page was a work of art and whose bindings were studded with jewels; carved wood and ivory in endless designs and for endless purposes; stained glass, enamels, tiles. Every church, abbey, and cathedral was by the beginning of the Hundred Years' War as full of works of consummate art as the private museum of a modern millionaire, and were you to gather together the treasures of ecclesiastical crafts in the Cluny, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the Metropolitan in New York you might have about as much as at that time might have been found in a provincial cathedral of the second class or a minor monastery. In France the sculpture has been largely, and the glass partially, saved; in Flanders many of the pictures; in England a good proportion of the churches themselves, but the rest is gone, utterly and irrevocably, and we can hardly more than dimly imagine from a Gloucester candlestick, an Ascoli cope, a Shrine of St. Sebald the nature of what has been taken from us.

Even from the first these things had three qualities that argued against their preservation, the world being what it is. They were intrinsically valuable because of their bronze and silver and gold and precious gems; therefore in the wars that followed the cresting of mediævalism they were stolen wholesale by one army after another and their jewels plucked out, and then they were broken up, melted down, and returned to their original estate of lumps of bullion, or dead metal, all of which had its price. They were the most sacred material things possessed by the Church that had created them; part and parcel of the Catholic sacraments, memorials of the honoured dead, caskets for the reverent treasuring of the relics of the saints; therefore they were the particular object of the blind and furious hatred of Protestants, whether Huguenots, Calvinists, Presbyterians, or, in a less degree, Lutherans. They were Gothic in their inimitable art, hence anathema to the bewigged bishops, the worldly priests, and, most dangerous of all, the conceited canons of the eighteenth century. What the thief overlooked the fanatic destroyed, and what he forgot the ignorant and vulgar amateur purged away to make place for imitation marble and secular

frippery. After four centuries of this it is a wonder that anything remains, and, to tell the truth, there is little enough.

Nevertheless, it is surprising how much of this was still in our chosen territory in 1914, and how much that is in museums elsewhere came originally from the same place. Liège had its extraordinary bronze font, Hal a font, a lectern, and many other treasures of late Gothic and early Renaissance art; Louvain, Tirlemont, Xanten, Aix, and Trèves each had a few pieces of metal work of immense artistic value, while in Bruges, Ghent, Brussels, and Antwerp, in Laon, Noyon, Sens, and Reims were a few miraculously preserved shrines, tapestries, vestments, and sacred vessels. As for the treasures of the European and American museums, the greater part came from Flanders, Brabant, the Rhineland, or eastern France, for this was the great centre of industry, the fountainhead of artistic inspiration. Of the "dinanderie" that owed its existence to the influence of the four great leaders, St. Eloi, St. Willigis, Abbot Suger, and Bishop Bernward, absolutely nothing remains except the fine group of bronze masterpieces by the last at Hildesheim. Liège had, however, the extremely important

bronze font made by Regnier of Huy about 1112, and Lille possessed a censer of his workmanship, while in Maastricht was a great shrine of gilded and enamelled copper set with precious stones; the Convent of Notre Dame at Namur and the church of Walcourt had no less than eighteen specimens of the handicraft of Brother Hugh of the great but long ago destroyed Abbey at Oignies between the Meuse and the Sambre, representing the art of a century later, while later still we had the "Chasse de Notre Dame" and the reliquary of St. Eleutherus at Tournai, and the shrine of St. Gertrude of Nivelles made in 1272. Of the vast product of the fourteenth century there are a few fragments only, an eagle lectern and a great paschal candlestick at Tongres, some crosses, reliquaries, monstrances, and candlesticks at Aix, Tongres, Furnes, Mainz, Xanten, Bruges, and Ghent, but, fortunately it would now seem, the greater part of what remains is preserved in the museums of Paris and London and therefore safe for another period. Outside the museums the great treasures were to be found at Sens and Laon, the latter being particularly rich, as is proved by the fact that the cathedral is said to contain no less than eighty reliquaries covering the whole



FIFTEENTH-CENTURY FLEMISH TAPESTRY



period of the Middle Ages. So far as monumental tombs are concerned, every church in France has been swept clear, chiefly by the Revolutionists, not one of the marvellous collections at St. Denis and Reims remaining, but in Bruges we still have the fine tomb of Mary of Burgundy, of black marble encased in a foliated tracery of gilded copper and coloured enamels.

In the bourdons of France and the carillons of the Low Countries the art of the metal-worker combines with that of music. Both the carillon and the English peal are late developments, the first of the sixteenth, the second of the seventeenth century, but from the beginning of the thirteenth century great bells, used singly or in small combinations, were in constant use. Most of the latter are gone, melted down in the Hundred Years' War and the Revolution in France, and the wars of religion in the Rhineland and the Low Countries, though a few remain at Amiens, Sens, Metz, and Beauvais, with one weighing over a ton which hung at Reims until last year. The carillons of Belgium and Holland were intact until that time, though many have now fallen with the splendid towers that held them. Arras is gone and probably Dunkerque; Louvain and Ypres

are gone and possibly Mons; Malines, most beautiful of all, has been battered to pieces and its forty-five bells have been cracked, melted, hurled in ruin down through the many stories of the great tower. Time after time during the last generation from twenty thousand to forty thousand people have assembled to hear these bells rung by M. Denyn, the greatest master of the art, but they will hear them no more until, perhaps, when the world is made new the bells of Malines may ring out again to welcome the dawn of a better day.

Whether the English peal of an octave, with the bells attuned to the intervals of the diatonic scale, and swung by hand, a man to each rope, in accordance with the most intricate mathematical formulas and without recognised melodies, is better or worse art than the carillon of thirty-five to fifty-two bells, covering sometimes four octaves and a half, in accord with the chromatic scale, fixed in their head-stocks and struck by hammers manipulated by one man sitting before a keyboard, and reproducing the most elaborate musical compositions, is no part of the argument. Each has its place, each is a mode of musical art, and just because one may like the strange and



subtle variations of an English peal thundering out its vibrant tones from great bells swinging and clashing in a grey old tower, it does not follow that he must reject the floating and ethereal harmonies of the Belgian carillon pouring into the still evening air strange melodies that are eternally haunting in their poignant appeal. They are silent now, even those that still hang in their tall towers, and the roar of giant artillery, splitting and harshly reverberating, has taken their place. In the good beginnings iron was anathema and might not be used in the service of the Church; bronze alone was tolerable. Now iron is king and holds dominion over the world, transmuted into steel through the offices of its ally, coal. Bronze is rejected, shattered, dethroned, but some of the great bells yet remain, hanging silent and patient while hell rages around them and iron asserts its universal dominion. Perhaps by and by they will give tongue again, proclaiming the end of the iron age, calling in once more a better and more righteous sovereignty.

Some day the world will awaken to the fact that there are other great arts besides architecture, painting, and sculpture; already there is a suspicion abroad that music, poetry, and the drama

are arts also and not merely vehicles for the expression of temperament, and there is even a preliminary waking of the subconsciousness which threatens to confess that ritual and ceremonial have been, and may be again, a great fine art in the same sense. Little by little the pharisaic phrase, "industrial art," is yielding some of its component parts and offering them to the very superior *haute noblesse* of fine art, and amongst these are stained glass and tapestry. The recent discovery of the existence of Chartres Cathedral and its glass has settled one point, and much against their will the artist and the amateur and the commentator have had to admit that the art of these windows, and of those at Bourges and Le Mans and Angers, is of the highest, and quite in the class of the painters of Italy and Flanders, the sculptors of France and England (in the Middle Ages), and the master builders from Laon to Amiens.

Of this particularly glorious art, which has become more completely a lost art than any other ever revealed to man, there is little in the region under consideration. It did not issue from the Heart of Europe, but had its beginnings elsewhere and its culmination as well. It was an art of

the twelfth and thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, degenerating rapidly after the year 1300, and, while the churches and abbeys and cathedrals between the Seine and the Somme were once splendid with glass that almost rivalled that of Chartres, the Reformation and the Revolution had seen to it that the major part of this glory had been made to depart. Amiens retains a little in its chevet chapels, and Reims only a year ago was blazing with an apocalyptic splendour that is now transformed into gaping and fire-swept openings, laced by distorted metal bars, and heaps of pulverised refuse ground into the blood and ashes on shattered pavements. Whatever the Low Countries may have had is long since gone the way of all the other beautiful things the Calvinists did not like and only fragments, imitations, and Renaissance absurdities remain.

With the other great art, that of tapestry, the case is fortunately different. This was almost the intimate art of the Heart of Europe, finding its beginnings in Aix when the Greek princess brought with her from the East the first examples of Byzantine needlework and weaving that had been seen in the West in her day, and going on to new glories in Arras, Brussels, Tournai, Audenaarde, Lille,

Enghien. The perfection of tapestry weaving came in the last half of the fifteenth century, but the advance was regular for a century before, and if we can judge from the few examples left the work of the fourteenth century had many fine and powerful qualities that were all its own. The collapse came suddenly, early in the sixteenth century, being marked by Raphael's intrusion into a field where he had no place, and after this there was no more hope for tapestry than for the other arts, and it rapidly sank to the point where the products of the Gobelins, Beauvais, and Aubussons looms were much admired.

If Gothic tapestry had possessed a pecuniary value easily translated into cash, or if it had been closely associated with the most sacred religious things, we should have preserved less than is actually the case. As it is, it was seldom the victim of cupidity or fanaticism, but by its very nature it was perishable, and therefore nearly all the work antedating the fifteenth century has vanished. Its greatest enemy, however, was the ignorant and vulgar culture of the nineteenth century, and during the first fifty years of this destructive epoch it melted rapidly away. Just before the outbreak of the French Revolution it

is no exaggeration to say that there were in France alone enough tapestries to carpet a road from Paris to Arras; of course, many were of the Gobelins type and comparatively valueless as art, but every château, every cathedral and monastery, almost every church had its sets of "arras," and these were of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; the curious products of the Renaissance were confined to kings, princes, great nobles, and to their respective palaces. With 1793 the massacre began; everything feudal, even by implication, was burned, sometimes just out of pure deviltry, as when tapestries were consumed in heaps at the foot of the "Tree of Liberty"; sometimes through thrift, as when in 1797 the Directory burned at one time nearly two hundred ancient works of art to recover the gold and silver bullion—which they did at this one holocaust to the value of \$13,000. Mr. G. L. Hunter has reckoned the value of these destroyed tapestries at about \$2,500,000 in the market of to-day. At this rate, the current value of all the tapestries in France at the Revolution would have been about \$250,000,000.

No appreciation of this value developed until nearly the end of the nineteenth century. In 1852 a set of ten, formerly belonging to Louis

Philippe, with a total length of one hundred and twenty feet, sold for about \$1,200, and at the same sale another set of six, running to eighty feet, was bought for \$400. At present the intrinsic value of these wonderful creations is quite fully appreciated, and any one who can secure a fifteenth-century work for less than \$300 a square yard is fortunate. And yet during the whole of the eighteenth century tapestries were ruthlessly cut up to form floor rugs, used for packing bales of merchandise, or, as at Angers, slashed into strips to protect the roots of orange-trees from the cold, or nailed on the stalls of the bishop's stable so that the episcopal nags might not scar their precious flanks. This last outrage, by the way, was perpetrated on the unique series of the Apocalypse, a sequence of panels eighteen feet high with a total length of four hundred and seventy-two feet, woven in Paris about 1370 from designs by Jean de Bruges, court painter to the Emperor Charles V, for the use of the Duke of Anjou in his private chapel, and at a cost (in the money of to-day) of upward of \$60,000. They had been given to the cathedral by King René in 1480, but by the beginning of the nineteenth century they were quite out of fashion and therefore useless;

so until a rag merchant sufficiently accommodating could be found they were used as noted above and finally sold (the opportunity at last offering) in 1843 for \$60, the purchaser ultimately returning them to the cathedral when some glimmerings of intelligence came back to the ecclesiastical authorities.

When this sort of thing was the rule in France and England and Germany for more than a century during which civilisation and culture were progressing with such notable rapidity, it is a miracle that anything has come down to us, particularly when you remember what the Calvinists and Sansculottes and Reformers did to monasteries and châteaux and entire cities in the two preceding centuries; but a good deal did so come down, including even the poor remains of the very much domesticated tapestries of Angers. There is only one other fourteenth-century set woven at Arras that can positively be identified, and that is the series now (or recently) in the cathedral of Tournai, though we know from wills and inventories that at the beginning of the fifteenth century they existed in hundreds. The remains of this early work are fine and strong in design, powerful as decoration, clear but faded in

colour. With the fifteenth century there came an amazing advance, similar to the sudden appearance of the Van Eycks in painting at exactly the same moment. The "Burgundian Sacraments"—or what remains—now in the Metropolitan Museum as the gift of the late J. P. Morgan, is one of the finest examples in existence of this earliest of the great periods. Admirable as it is, it fails in perfection of beauty before the wonderful works of art that immediately followed. With the beginning of the fifteenth century tapestry weaving came suddenly to a level of supreme excellence that places it for a hundred years on a level with the other arts, however august they may be. Very few of these masterpieces remain in Belgium; you must search for them in Paris, in London, in Madrid, in New York, in the museums of all the world, but the search is rewarded by the discovery of an art that, however brief its day, was one of the great arts of the world.

Each art has its own medium of expression and to this medium it absolutely adheres in its periods of greatness, adapting itself to its limitations, working within them, and even making them tributary to its excellence. Limitations are, after



all, the greatest gift of God to man instead of being, as the last century feigned, something that deplorably existed only to be transcended; without them man would revert to the condition of the jellyfish or the primal ooze of the depths of the sea; with them he has an opportunity to demonstrate his divine elements through a development that is both in spite of and because of the firm lines they draw that cannot be overpassed. One of the great things in art is its revelation of the possibility of spiritual achievement by and through the narrowest physical limitations. When, on the other hand, architecture tries to assimilate the peculiar methods of bridge building; when painting intrudes into the province of sculpture, literature, photography, or even music; when music becomes mathematical or takes to itself the habits of the circus performer; when sculpture deliquesces into a sloppy kind of black-and-white illustration; when stained glass and tapestry become pictorial; when, in fact, all the arts forsake their own provinces and deny their own limitations, as they have tended to do during the last century, splashing over, the one into the other, they cease to be arts at all and become unprofitable aberrations.

Only three great arts have come into existence during the last two thousand years—music, stained glass, and tapestry—and each developed its own exact and individual mode of expression. Music was as old as architecture, painting, sculpture, poetry, and the drama, but under the influences of Christianity it gradually transformed itself into what was almost a new art and one that has remained the only vital art through all the unfriendly influences of modern civilisation. Stained glass was an absolutely new art, taking its rise in the twelfth century, culminating in the thirteenth, decaying through the two following centuries, and entirely disappearing in the eighteenth century. It is an art of Christianity, of Frank genius, and of the Île de France. Tapestry is also a new art, beginning about 1350, culminating a century later, dying almost in a day (as a great art), about 1520. It also is Christian, but, unlike glass, it is primarily secular, and it is explicitly and almost exclusively Flemish, the great contribution of a distinguished race to the imperishable art of the world.

It was the glorification of a national industry—weaving—and is significant as showing how, under wholesome impulses and in a stimulating envi-

ronment, a simple industry may be transfigured and made into art. Its medium was peculiarly delicate, subtle, and beautiful, threads of spun wool, silk and gold and silver woven by hand into a fixed warp of strung threads. These filaments of silk (as in the finest work) had peculiar qualities of beauty, combining both lustrousness and depth, while the colours being entirely vegetable dyes, with none of the harsh horrors of the analine by-products of coal-tar, were infinitely varied and of unique richness and soft splendour. Fortunately, this new artistic mode was developed sufficiently prior to the breakdown of art which was signalled by the career of a man in himself a very great artist—Raphael—to permit a full century of life, and at the hands of a people who had a peculiar appreciation of decoration and of decorative methods. The result was startling, for a new art was born and one of the most distinguished quality. As colour decoration the tapestries of Flanders come near being the very finest things in the world, although we must judge them from a few examples only, the admittedly greatest having long since fallen victims to greed, fanaticism, and the stolid ignorance of the eighteenth century. Fortunately for the general public,

the remaining masterpieces are now widely scattered and may be studied with comparative ease, the Metropolitan Museum in New York being particularly rich and having, either in its own name or by loan, the Burgundian Sacraments, the matchless "Mazarin" Christ in Glory, the almost equally beautiful "Coronation of the Virgin," as well as scores of others, many of them of supreme excellence.

It is as impossible to describe a tapestry in words as it is to do the same by a Chartres window. In point of composition the tapestries of the fifteenth century are matched only by the greatest pictures; even when they are crowded with figures there is the most masterly spacing of masses, the most consummate balance of form. When one realises that in every case the design is the work of the members of the guild and not of the more famous painters of the time, the wonder grows over the apparently universal feeling for the highest type of artistic expression. Compared with the best of the Flemish tapestries, the boasted and "much admired" composition of Raphael in the "Disputa" and the "School of Athens," of Michael Angelo in the Sistine Chapel, is mathematical and academic. In line

and line composition there is the same exquisite sensitiveness that is almost Greek or Japanese in its subtlety and rhythm, while the colour, though in many cases faded, is as pure and musical in its several tones as it is resonant and splendid in combination. And through all this consummate mastery and this supreme artistic sense run a peculiar charm and distinction that are found only in such unique products as the pictures of Jan van Eyck, Fra Angelico, the Lorenzetti, Carpaccio, and their kind. Through them you enter into a dim and golden fairyland full of wistful music and haunting memories, where fair ladies, courteous knights, delicate-winged angels, aureoled saints in blazing dalmatics pass like dreams through far countries, "where it is always afternoon" and where the land is always lovely, the skies serene, the flowers and birds and little beasts friendly and well beloved. Chretien de Troyes and the troubadours and the Court of Love, King Arthur and Roland and King René, Guenivere, and the gracious queens and gentle ladies of all the Middle Ages live again, or rather prolong their lives through a passive immortality into which whoever understands is welcome to enter and sit him down in peace.

## XIV

### ART IN THE RHINELAND

**F**ROM Charlemagne's ambitious centre at Aix-la-Chapelle the influence of a new culture went west rather than east, and it is not until the eleventh century that we can look for art of any sort along the valley of the Rhine and in the lands of old Lorraine. There was little enough elsewhere, but when, at the finger-touch of a new monasticism calling a new northern blood to action, civilisation began again in Normandy and then in the Île de France, its echo in the Rhineland was far and long delayed, and never more than an echo at most. There were bad kings until the second Crusade and the coming of the Cistercians in 1174, and little culture; but from then on there was a distinct spiritual revival, a new impulse in religion and in life, and as a result the output of art of all kinds was greatly increased. The three elements entering into the new architecture were: the revived tradition of the old work of the Carolings, much of which still existed

in ruinous form, the new ideas brought home from Syria by the crusaders, and the infiltration of Lombard fashions from north Italy, with the Cistercian monks always exerting their austere and reforming influence toward simplicity.

Many of the earliest examples of this new work—at least the earliest now existing—are across the Rhine, in Thuringia and Saxony, and are outside our survey. Gernrode, Essen, Hildesheim, are all beyond our territory, but Cologne is this side the river and contains some of the most organic and best of the late tenth and early eleventh century work. Sta. Maria in Capitolio and St. Martin are both of that very peculiar type of plan that has an apse and apsidal transepts of equal size and semicircular in plan. The central tower is supported on four piers made up of groups of four, as at San Marco in Venice, and the apse and transepts are surrounded by ambulatories, the main walls being carried on columns, set rather close together and carrying round arches. It is an interesting and ingenious scheme, with great possibilities of development, though it has almost never been used elsewhere; probably it is of Syrian origin, the idea being brought home by early crusaders, though it may be Byzantine, in

which case also it was probably derived from Antioch, where the crusaders found so much of value to them in the development of the later art of Europe. St. Martin's has also a very beautiful tower with a high broach spire and admirably designed corner turrets. The composition of the church from the east, with its curving apsidal lines, its delicate little colonnades of Lombard form under the eaves, and the graceful yet powerful towers, is noble and dignified, and the whole building is far more organic and logically articulated than the bigger work of a century later farther up the Rhine.

The Church of the Apostles is nearer this later type and has its unfortunate agglomeration of ill-placed towers, but St. Gereon is *sui generis*; it can hardly be said to have any plan at all, for it is made up of a simple little aisleless church of three bays with a round apse and two small transept-like towers, joined on to an irregular decagon of a nave, somewhat elliptical in plan, with large niches in each of the eight lateral sides and a square porch or narthex at the west end. This anomalous "nave" is early thirteenth century it is true, while the eastern church is one hundred and fifty years older, but the Gothic



work is on foundations undoubtedly Roman and takes the place of a structure of somewhat similar plan built by the Empress Helena. The sequence is curious; there was first a circular or elliptical Roman building, on the foundations of which the Empress Helena built her church, the crypt of which still remains, then the easterly choir was built by Archbishop Hanno late in the eleventh century, and finally the original main church was torn down and rebuilt on Gothic lines about 1225.

In nearly all the Romanesque churches of Cologne an attempt has been made to reproduce the original polychromatic decoration which once covered all portions of the masonry, but the results are not eminently satisfactory, for mechanical diaper and stencilling cannot take the place of the old work which was done freely and without exactness of line and spacing, while the colours and the medium used were quite different from what is employed to-day. There is no doubt that once every Gothic interior, now grey and sombre, or garish in its clean whitewash and mathematical jointing of painted lines, was entirely covered with the richest possible surface decoration in colours and gold, and the result must have been a gorgeousness and a gaiety of

which we know nothing and that would probably shock our sensitive taste to the point of hysteria. One would like to see some great church with full colour decoration, but as matters now stand, with oil paint, stencils, coal-tar colours, and all that, the experiment could hardly be made with any degree of safety.

In Cologne also are many early, middle, and late Gothic churches; that of the Minorites, St. Severins, St. Panteleon, St. Andreas, St. Cunibert; in fact, Cologne is especially rich in churches of many styles and most of them remarkably good, but they are apt to be overlooked by the tourist who can see, and cares to see, only the overgrown grandeur of the cathedral. Farther up the Rhine we find a long succession of great churches which are characteristically German and well show the best the Teutonic genius was capable of under the highest impulse; Bonn, Coblenz, Mayence, Worms, and Spires are all huge structures and quite in a class by themselves. They are not beautiful by any stretch of courtesy; big they are and massive, with curious combinations of multiplied apses and transepts and towers, but they are without organic quality of any kind, their composition is diffuse and casual, their de-



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tail crude and uninteresting. Nowhere is there a step forward in the development of organism, and as they increase in size they show only a multiplication of rather infelicitous parts. Underneath is an idea that was susceptible of development into something fine and national, but it never had either the time or the spirit to work itself out and so remains a heavy and rather illiterate labouring after something too dimly seen to be really stimulating in the sense in which the ideal in Normandy and France was stimulating. Actually there was more of promise in the work of the eleventh century, as we see it at Hildesheim and Cologne, but this also was left undeveloped and never worked out its inherent possibilities.

The architectural development of Germany began too late; it was always a full century behind France and Italy, and when the Rhenish people were hammering away at their clumsy and uninspired giants of masonry that never seemed to become anything else and never produced any elements of novelty or progress, either structurally or æsthetically, Normandy already had struck out those masterpieces of crescent vitality, Jumièges and the abbeys of Caen, while France was well along the highroad of her consummate

Gothic, through St. Denis, Noyon, Laon, and Paris.

This backwardness in the acceptance of civilisation has always worked against the attainment of the highest levels of culture by that portion of the Germanic nation north of the Danube and east of the Rhine, while it has given it a certain advantage in the achievement of material ends, since the ethical and religious considerations, that in a measure held elsewhere, were naturally lacking. No part of this wild land of savage and heathen tribes ever felt the touch of Roman civilisation, such as it was, and it was the last part of central Europe to be Christianised. The Bavarians, Burgundians, and Franks all accepted Christianity at the end of the fifth century, but the tribes between the Rhine and the Weser were heathens for another three hundred years. The Wendish lands (where Berlin now is) did not come into Christian Europe until the early eleventh century, at about the time, let us say, of Duke Richard of Normandy and the founding of the great abbeys and schools of Bec, Fécamp, and Jumièges; Pomerania (where the grenadiers come from) was converted after a fashion a hundred years later still, in the days of the highest

civilisation in Europe, but Prussia was the last of all, and when Christianity was preached in its arid plains and amongst its stubbornly heathen peoples Reims cathedral was rising into its sublime majesty, marking the high attainments of almost eight centuries of cumulative Christian culture.

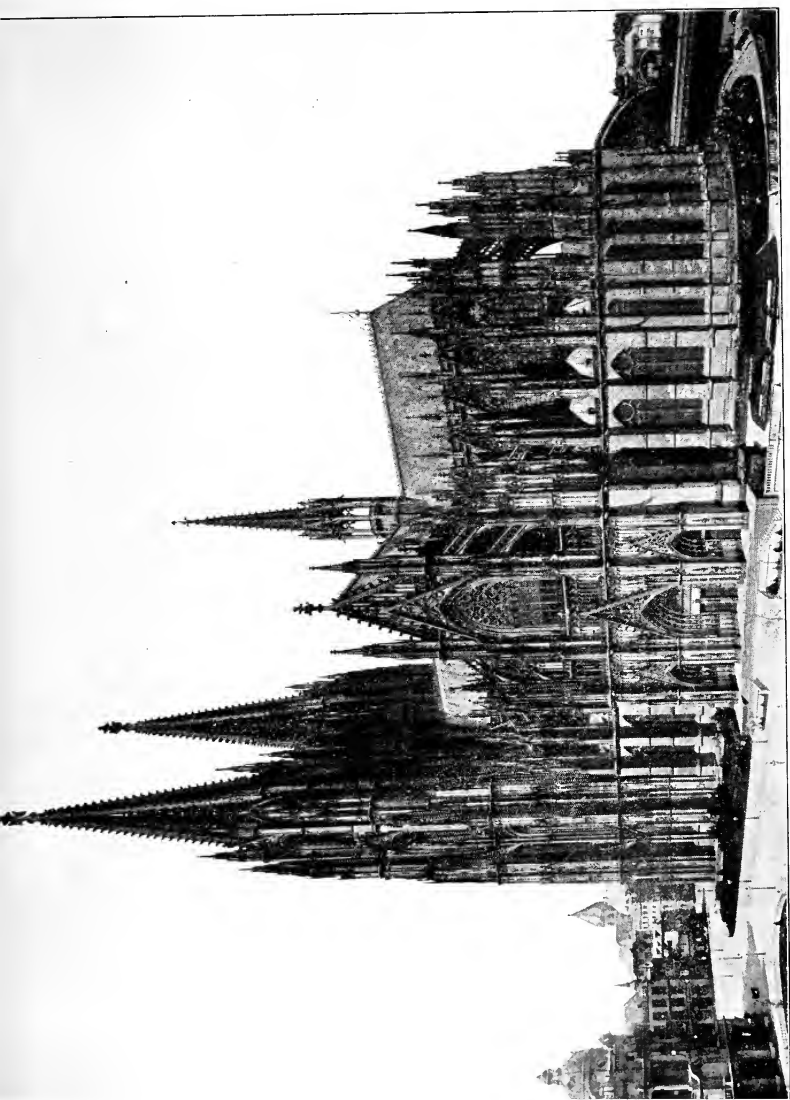
Even in the Rhineland, however, there was something lacking to that culture that always has issue in great architectural art; many things were started but none was ever finished. The school of Cologne gave place to the Rhenish fashion and this was suddenly abandoned for Gothic after it had been raised to its highest point in France and was at the very moment of decline. Neither Cologne nor Strasbourg is of the same quality of perfection as Bourges or Amiens or Reims; indeed, they both fall immeasurably short, and though later, across the Rhine, in Freibourg, Erfurt, even as far afield as Vienna, Teutonic blood was to begin a new coursing through veins already hardening, again there was to be no culmination and the Renaissance was accepted, ready-made, as it came from France and Italy.

Cologne is a magnificent essay in premeditated art, and it has certain qualities of almost overpowering grandeur that are wholly its own; the

west front with its vast towers is a masterpiece of consistent design, but it is so knowing and academic that it misses the inspiration accorded to more modest and God-fearing master builders, while the interior is wire-drawn and metallic and quite without the infinite grace and subtlety of the best French or even English work. Of the sense of scale it has little or nothing, its detail is of a cast-iron quality, and altogether it seems like a very successful nineteenth-century essay in academic design.

Of course, much of what we see is modern; the choir is fairly early for Gothic in Germany, having been begun in 1248 and finished just seventy-five years later; the transepts followed at once, and the lower portion of the nave, but interest died out and some time during the fifteenth century work completely stopped. During the Renaissance nothing was done except to mess up the forlorn interior with pseudo-classic ineptitudes, and finally the Revolutionists came over to turn the whole thing into a storage place for hay. In 1823 royalty conceived the scheme of restoring the ruin and completing the entire design in accordance with certain original plans which had been preserved. It is said, possibly with truth,





COLOGNE

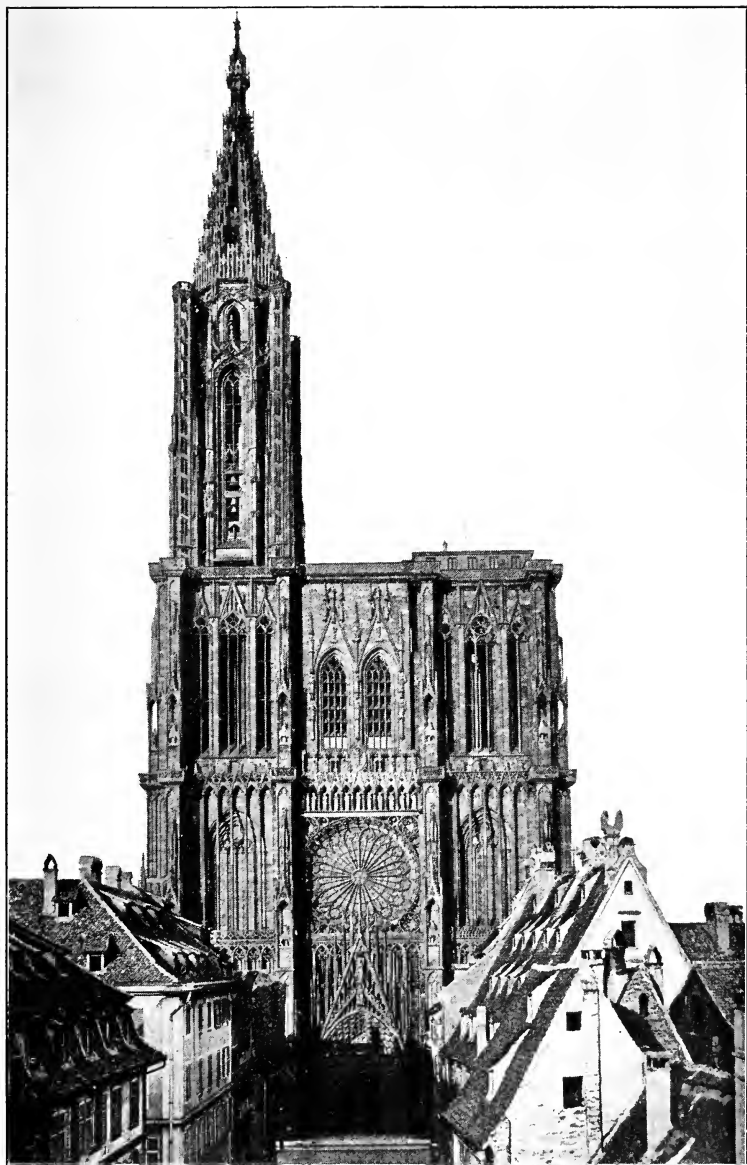


that the first architect, Master Gerard, sold his soul to the devil as the price for these same plans, and if so he would perhaps have done better had he followed the practice of the master masons of a century earlier in France, who preferred to deal with other spiritual powers and not on the basis of trade. However this may be, the work went on at the expense of all Germany, and was finally completed in 1880, at a cost of some five millions of dollars.

As it stands, then, it is largely the work of restoration and of nineteenth-century talent; hence, if in the fortunes of war it should be subjected to the hail of shell and shrapnel from French and British batteries, so working out the hard old Israelitish law of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and suffering even as Reims has suffered, the world would look on with far different sentiments since, apart from its windows (some of them) and pictures and tombs, nothing would be lost that could not be replaced and after a better fashion; for after all when you say the most you can for the nineteenth century it will generally be admitted that, even in Germany, it was not a stimulating era so far as creative or even archæological Gothic art is concerned.

Strasbourg is much more interesting and poetic, with great refinement and originality in design, though its taste is far from impeccable, its structural sense gravely deficient. The tendency is wholly toward lace-like and fantastic design, but it has little resemblance to the late French flamboyant with its curving and interlacing lines; instead, it is more suggestive of the English perpendicular, with its scaffolding of vertical lines applied to, but not a part of, the basic fabric. It has no consistency of plan, for the eastern end, with its semicircular apse and portions of its transepts, is of a singularly noble type of twelfth-century Romanesque, while the nave is mid-thirteenth century and the tower and upper portion of the west front are a hundred years later. Confused as it is, there is an extraordinary charm about it all, for every part is personal and distinguished, full of novel and poetic ideas and all kinds of unaffected touches of genius. The wonderful colour of the exterior and the singularly fine glass of the interior have much to do with its general effect of a delicate mediæval loveliness that makes amends for its architectural shortcomings.

Of the castle architecture of the Rhine there is



STRASBOURG



little left from the mediæval period from which one can gain an adequate idea of its excellence, which was probably great. As in Luxembourg, everything has been shattered into wildly picturesque ruins which are outside the category of architecture, and such Renaissance work as Heidelberg is quite as far without the same category, though for another reason; here even picturesque-ness of site and dilapidation cannot make amends for ignorance, assurance, and excruciating taste. As a matter of fact, the best architecture of the Rhine is the domestic building of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the half timber, many-gabled structures that give the little Rhine towns a charm that is unexcelled and testify to the native sense of beauty in the common people, when they were left alone and not confused by the self-satisfied and ill-bred interference of the connoisseur.

If Christian culture began too late along the Rhine to find a great expression in architecture, the same is not true of painting, which followed after and achieved much that the older art could not accomplish. The Teutonic tribes of the Rhine had always excelled in certain virtues of frugality, temperance, domestic morality, and a righteous revolt showed itself here against the

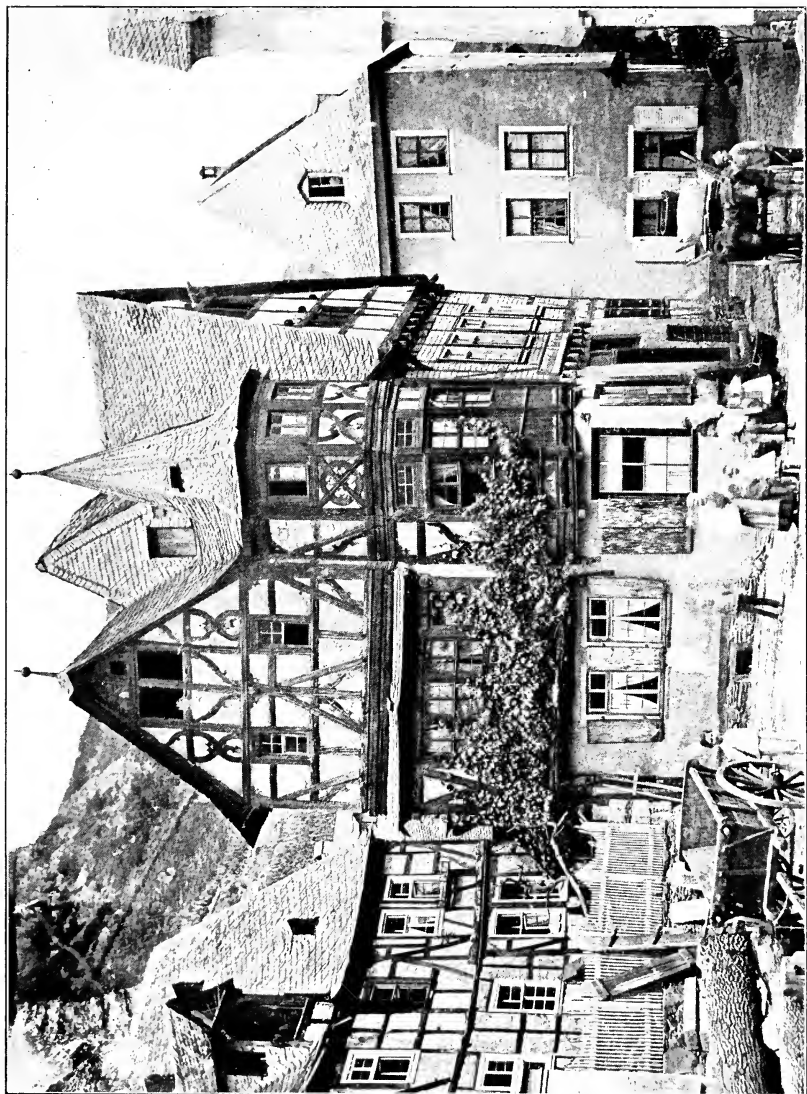
corruption of the Church and society in the fourteenth century that followed the first downward trend of mediævalism. Early in the century men and women began to draw away from a world with which they had little sympathy, striving for personal righteousness, the sense of an inner relation to God, the attainment through mystical means of escape from the devastating wars, the pestilence and famine, the favouritism and cupidity and licentiousness of the Church. The centre of these mystical brotherhoods was Cologne, particularly at the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth century, and it is not a mere coincidence that here at Cologne also, and at the same time, a new school of painting should come into existence, exactly as had happened a few years earlier in Siena and Florence. There had been great wall painting for several centuries, but it had always been an essential part of architecture, hieratic, formal, monumental, impersonal; now the new spiritual impulse was to work out an original and very personal form of expression on the basis of these earlier works, but at smaller scale and with a minute craftsmanship borrowed partly from the goldsmiths' work and the enamels for which Cologne



already was famous; partly from the exquisite illumination of the vellum volumes of the time. It was somewhere about 1350 that Master Wilhelm, who holds the same place in the north that was attained by Cimabue in the south, was born. His pictures are rare but there is one of great value in Cologne cathedral, the "St. Clara Triptych," and it shows all the elements now at work toward the development of the new art, the fine and masterly line and composition, with a strong rhythmic sense taken over from the fully developed wall painting of the preceding century, the delicate craftsmanship of the goldsmith, the illuminator, or the worker in enamels, and the extraordinary personal quality, the direct human appeal, that was furnished by the mystical seekers after union with God through a direct relationship outside the formalised institutions and practices of the Church. You get the quality best of all perhaps from the "Madonna of the Beanflower" in the Cologne Museum, another picture by Master Wilhelm, and as lovely and personal as one could ask. There are also the "Paradise pictures," equally human and even more mystical; visions of delicate and gracious gardens, where youths and ladies and children and angels all

minge in the midst of flowers and singing around the Queen of Heaven herself; efforts, one might think, to create a paradise for the imagination, where one could escape from the too numerous horrors of a none too accommodating world. The more specifically devotional pictures are very numerous and generally anonymous; painters then were craftsmen, members of guilds devoted to the upbuilding of the highest standards of workmanship, and caring little for their own personal fame. Picture exhibitions and competitions for prizes and medals were also unknown, which made a difference. In all these works is the same sweet humanism, the invariable personal appeal, and it is easy to understand that a new art such as this must have been a wonderful boon to a weary and disappointed generation.

The Teuton had at last found a field for the expression of that æsthetic sense that was one of the inalienable possessions of man down to the nineteenth century, and he made the very best of it, as he was to make the best of the still newer art of music a few centuries later. The world wanted this new art, and from Cologne it spread rapidly to the west into Flanders and Brabant, and south to Franconia and Suabia. To the



BACHARACH ON THE RHINE



school of Cologne Hubert van Eyck owed much, he could hardly have been what he was but for Master Wilhelm and his contemporaries, but he added something of his own Flanders, and more of himself, and the art he initiated rose immeasurably above its source.

In sculpture also the Teuton found a facile and congenial form of expression, but this art developed rather to the north and east of the Rhine. Hildesheim was, of course, the centre, for it was here that Bishop Bernward gathered or educated his amazing craftsmen in bronze. Where such an artist came from, as he who made the cathedral doors and the bronze column, heaven alone knows, for it was early in the eleventh century that these came into existence. They began a school, however, that continued in Saxony for many centuries and had its influence over all Germany. The early thirteenth-century bronze font, also in the cathedral, is one of those masterpieces that defy comparison. The great school of sculpture in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was that which grew up between the Elbe and the Hartz Mountains, not only in Hildesheim but Halberstadt, Bamberg, Freiberg, Magdebourg, Naumbourg, the masters of Magdebourg ranking with

those of Amiens and Reims. Undoubtedly there is French influence here, perhaps through the training, under the masters of France, of the craftsmen who later went back to their native lands to practise their art. In Strasbourg the French influence is even more clearly seen but here it is rather in the line of the more southerly schools. It is at Strasbourg that we find that singular and ingenious masterpiece, the "Pillar of the Angels," slender grouped shafts with intermediate niches, one above the other, each containing an exquisite statue of an apostle, an angel, or, at the top, our Lord at the Day of Judgment. This is one of those sudden and unprecedented happenings in mediæval art that mark the vast vitality, imagination, and personal initiative of the time. It has no progenitors, no successors, it is a sport of personal genius, and the masterpiece of one Ervin de Steinbach, who appears to have been the architect for the later portions of the cathedral.

Apart from Strasbourg, however, sculpture seems never to have been a favoured art in the Rhineland, and the painting of Cologne remains its chief claim to honourable record, though stained glass reached considerable heights, as is seen both

at Cologne and Strasbourg, and on definitely local lines. By the fifteenth century the Flemish schools of art of all kinds had succeeded by their sheer achievement in establishing their dominant influence along the Rhine, and with the Renaissance the lingering elements of an instinctive practice of beauty quite died away.

## XV

### THE FOREST OF ARDEN

WHERE the immemorial Forest of the Ardennes closes in on the Moselle that winds beautifully to the Rhine, there is a little land that can give us small aid in the way of art, for the hand of man and of an implacable fatality has been heavy, and little remains, but it is a place of infinite charm and of significance as well, while in the last year its ancient name has come into the light again, even as it was some centuries ago. It has borne many names, acknowledged many sovereignties; Roman Belgica, part of the kingdom of the Ripuarian Franks, Austrasia, Lorraine, a province of the Germanic Holy Roman Empire, Burgundy, the Netherlands (Spanish and Austrian), France again, both of the republican and imperial mode, then back in an amorphous Germany, and now, crushed into a tiny but concentrated state, an independent but sovereign Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, imprisoned for the moment in dark fastnesses of oppression where-



from no word issues forth, but destined under God to a triumphant release and to a restoration that may mean a return to earlier and wider frontiers.

Luxembourg means that portion of the Heart of Europe lying between the Meuse and the Moselle, and one line drawn from Limbourg to Trèves, another from Verdun to Metz. It is now a tithe of this, but who can say what may be in the future? All its great northern portion has for long been incorporated in the eternally honourable kingdom of Belgium, and there it will remain, but there is always the old Archbishopric of Trèves with its Moselle valley, and there are the lands along the Saar and the new (and old) frontiers of France. At present, as a result of three treaties in which it played the passive part of victim, it is a fourth the size it once had under its first Duke Wenceslas; the first section was lost in 1659, the second at the Congress of Vienna in 1815, the third and largest at London in 1859, but, as a Japanese guide remarked at the monastery of Horiuji, "The quality is not dependent on the numeraity of quantity," and as nothing was lost but land the indomitable spirit of the people remained intact and merely concentrated

itself still more intensely within its shrunken borders.

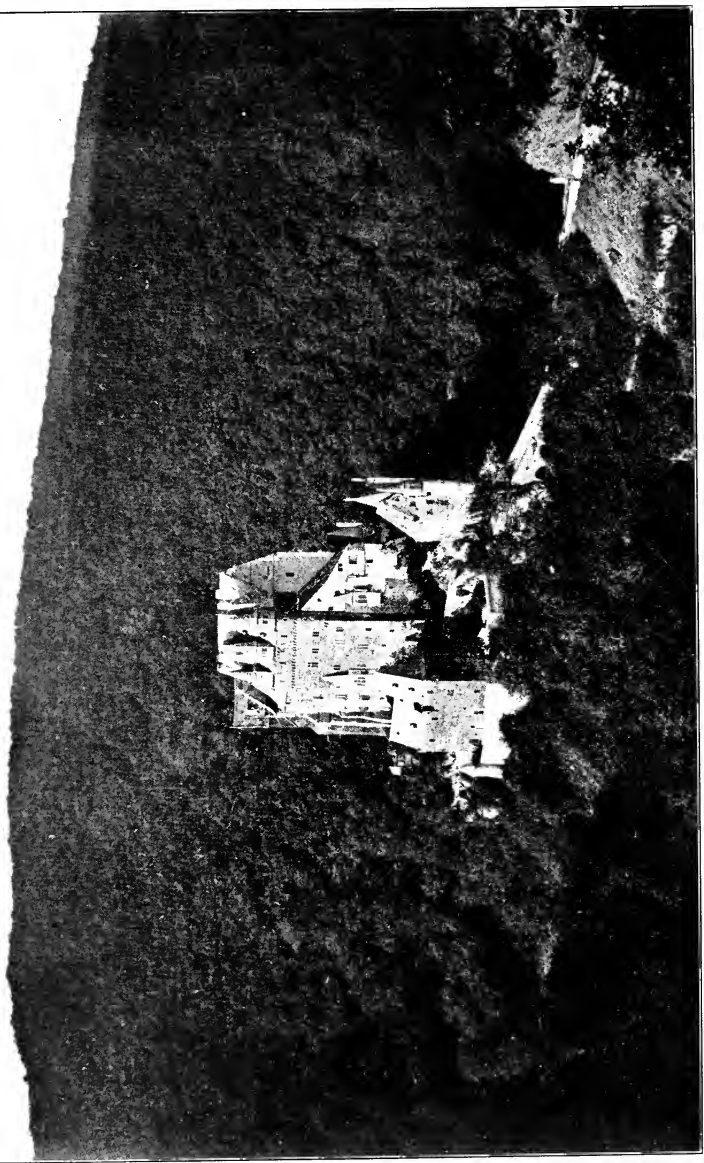
Luxembourg lies along that line where first the Teuton blended with the primitive Gaul, or Celt, and where a second mingling later took place between the result of the first—the Salian Frank—and the same old Teutonic stock. It is the mating-place of races and therefore the fighting-place as well, and always will remain so, as they and we now realise only too clearly. They were far enough apart, these Celts and Germans, to guarantee good progeny. The Gaul was huge of stature, blonde, long-haired, fond of fine clothes and golden chains. He was pastoral and agricultural, aristocratic in his social and political systems, incontinent, good-natured, quick-tempered, superstitious, Druidical. The Teuton was red-haired, shaven except for a fierce top-knot, grim in his clothing, contemptuous of agriculture and of everything else except fighting; as a youth he wore an iron collar which could not be removed until he had killed his man. Politically he was ultra-democratic; socially, monogamous and chaste; theologically, monotheistic. From the fusion of these two elements came the many tribes of Gallia Belgica, and in good time most of the

peoples of the Heart of Europe, of Flanders, Brabant, Luxembourg, Lorraine, the hither Rhineland, Champagne, Burgundy, Picardy, Artois. Trèves, head city of the Treveri, was the natural capital and so it became under the Cæsars when they had made their wilderness and called it peace.

It did not remain a wilderness long; presently came the pacific Cæsars of a later day and the whole land became first the "kitchen-garden of Rome" and then the Newport of the Empire. Fine roads cut the forests in every direction, land was cleared, agriculture intensified, so that shortly the whole region was a garden dotted with private parks and estates. Trèves was made a great city, with palaces, temples, baths, amphitheatres, the summer capital of Europe and second in Gaul only to Lyons. A city of manifold pleasures and as many beauties; rich, sumptuous, sensuous, where from the shores of Tiber and Bosporus enervated and exhausted devotees of the joy of living came to cool themselves and restore their vitality in the fresh air and the green river valleys of this curiously picturesque retreat. All along the Moselle rose gorgeous villas with their rooms of sheeted marble and mosaic and gilded cedar

and splendid fabrics, their terraced gardens and cool groves and wide-spreading parks. A golden day-dream focussed along the windings of a little river and destined, the sleepers dreamed, to endure for ever.

And then the greater dream of empire began to turn into nightmare. The Gallic legions revolted against a weakening hand in Rome, and Cæsars of a day and a thousand votes fought back and forth over the land, and burned and murdered and died until peace came again, and restoration, with real emperors refreshing themselves in their imperial city of Trèves and their dim forests on the hilly walls of the winding Moselle. War again, and ruin, this time of a nature to last for generations and to leave the marble villas to the slow but kindly burial of trees and vines and moss. Out of the terrible east the Huns came like a flood with the deadly Attila at their head, blind terror before them, death and silence behind. Just to the west, at Châlons, they were beaten back and fled eastward again (men thought for ever), and what was left became part of the new Frankish kingdom. Of the makers of this nation and the stock from which sprang Merovings, Carolings, and most of



SCHLOSS ELTZ



the other royal houses of Europe, the Reverend T. H. Passmore writes engagingly thus:

The record of this people, until the close of the fifth century, is dim and discursive. Up to that time they were more like a firework display than a people. They appear and disappear on the historic horizon confusingly, the only unifying condition being a general and most sacred sense of mission, the mission being the demolition of the universe. The first head upon which history steadily focusses its light is that of the great Clovis. He was lord of the small Salian tribe in Batavia and sacked and plundered all around him to such an extent that the other Frankish tribes who lived along the Belgic rivers were smitten with admiration and flocked to the standard of so virtuous a prince. . . . The pious Clovis was a born diplomatist. He was a sanguinary Teuton, a cultured Roman, and a Christian saint according to circumstances. He was great.

After clearing Gaul of the Burgundians and other Germans who still barred his progress, and wiping out the Alemanni—those chronic foes whom Rome had found invincible—Clovis listened to the prayers of his Christian wife, Clotilde, and was baptised in Rheims Cathedral by St. Remigius with three thousand of his devoted Franks, who would probably have heard of it again had they made any trouble about the matter. He does not seem, however, to have grown any nicer or kinder on this account. St. Gregory of Tours, his biographer and panegyrist, who was somewhat modestly endowed with the sense of humour, tells us gravely that on one occasion, after dismissing with prayer a synod of the Gallican Church, he quietly proceeded to butcher all the Merovingian princes. Having pushed his arms into France, he fixed on Paris as his royal seat; conquered the Goths under Alaric, his only remaining rivals; and was invested

with purple tunic in St. Martin's church at Tours. Twenty-five years after his death the Emperor Justinian generously bestowed on his sons the provinces of Gaul, which they already possessed; and most gracefully absolved its inhabitants from their allegiance to himself, which had only existed in his own august imagination. Thus the French kingdom of the Merovingians, to the generation succeeding Clovis, already included all Gaul from western France to the Rhine and their suzerainty reached to the Alps and beyond them.

Luxembourg had long been Christian after a fashion; the first Bishop of Trèves had been appointed by St. Peter himself, while the Emperor Constantine, who had lived much in the city, fostered the new religion in every way. Later, at the time of the era-making Pepin of Heristal, St. Willibrord came from England on his great mission to the heathen of Friesland, and while converting them, and much of Norway and Denmark to boot, established here at Echternach a great monastery that was his spiritual power-house, from which he drew the energy that sent him on his endless journeys and cruises, by land and sea, for the winning of souls to Christ. He did his work well, none better, and wherever he went Christianity went with him, and a new civilisation, a new culture, that remained for many centuries after he had been called to his high reward,



buried in his dear abbey at Echternach and enrolled in the Kalendar of Saints.

It was a vast monastery and a magnificent one, but it is a monastery no longer; for centuries it continued to pour out from its inexhaustible Benedictine store, missionaries, prophets, priests, leaders and protectors of the people; fostering education, agriculture, the arts; establishing order, nursing a piety that found its reward in this world through the consciousness of an ever-widening civilisation, and a greater reward in heaven. Then the power and wealth grew too great for the equanimity of princes, and it was robbed by one after another, oppressed by lay abbots *in commendam*, its Benedictine monks driven out and secular canons intruded, and finally pillaged by recreant bishops of the new dispensation of humanism and enlightenment, and by that concentration and apotheosis of the same, Le Roi Soleil, and so handed over to the emissaries of the deluge that followed him, the attractive exemplars of revolution, who swept the place clean of books and pictures and statues and all the hoarded art of a thousand years—yes, even of the poor ashes of the good saint himself—to make place a half century later for the ashes and

slag of blast-furnaces set up within the ancient walls, and for the housing of soldiers and their mounts.

Still, the work could not wholly be undone, Luxembourg was a Christian state and so it remained, through fair days and foul, the fairest being perhaps those when, united to Flanders and Brabant under the Emperor Maximilian, it fell into the charge of that great lady and unofficial saint, Margaret "of Malines," whose story I have tried to tell elsewhere.

With the wars of religion this peace and prosperity came to an end and for two hundred years all the duchy was devastated by all the armies of Europe, from those of Francis I to the obscene hordes of the French Republic. It had never revolted against the Catholic religion nor against its varied rulers, and its reward was a slow and savage extermination. Cities were burned and their names forgotten; great abbeys and churches like those of Orval and Clairefontaine were utterly extinguished; tall castles that crowned every height of land were blown up with gunpowder; fields and farms became waste land; and through starvation, massacre, and exile the population was reduced to a tithe of its former numbers, and

at last, by the republic that came to bring liberty, taxed into an all-engulfing penury.

The era of enlightenment had not been wholly happy in its action on Luxembourg, but it was free at last, and, in 1867, independent, as it remained until that memorable day in August, 1914, the day of broken treaties, when the little Grand Duchess backed her motor-car across the bridge, closing it with a pathetic barrier in the vain protest of honour against a force that did not recognise the meaning of the word or the existence of the thing it signified.

Luxembourg to-day is not a place where one may go to revel in the artistic memorials of a great past; the great past is there, and its memory is still green, but even more than Brabant or Champagne has it borne the grievous harrowing of endless wars and recrudescant barbarisms, not the least destructive of these visitations being the nineteenth century in its satisfying completeness, which saw many an abbey and old haunted castle dismantled, reduced to road-metal, and carted away for the value inherent in its raw material, or turned to inconceivably base uses from all of which some pecuniary profit might be obtained. Once it was as rich in enormous castles

as any country in the world that happily has a mediæval past. Bourscheid on its great hill, lordly and dominating still and a wilderness of vast crags of masonry, in spite of all that man could do; Brandenbourg, rigid and riven in its ring of mountains; Esch, split into towering and sundered fragments on the raw cliffs overhanging the Sûre; Hollenfel, Clervaux, spared by war to fall victim to the contemptuous neglect of owners who preferred pseudo-Gothic villas with all modern conveniences; Beaufort, with its noble proportions and its beauty of a later and more gracious mediævalism; Vianden, most fascinating of all with its dizzy gables, and its chapel still intact in spite of the wide ruin of its surroundings. And every castle ruin is haunted to heart's desire, crowded with attested ghosts whose consistent habits and dependable visitations are a peculiar joy in a world that until a twelvemonth ago could not believe in the impossible and promptly discounted the improbable. Any peasant in Luxembourg knew better, and not only the ruins but the whole duchy is honeycombed by the midnight prowlings of an entire population of delectable phantoms, while the stories and legends of their commerce in the past with lords and ladies and

knights and monks and bishops form a literature in themselves.

In spite of its losses, the land was one of infinite and unfamiliar charm; a land of wide and high plateaus cut by many winding river courses, each a possible journey of varying delights. Our and Sûre and Black Erenz; Alzette and Clerf and White Erenz, with many others of minor flow, cut the duchy in every direction, all at last finding the goal of their waters in the magical Moselle, as it flows past old Roman Trèves on its devious way to the Rhine. And it was a kind of little earthly paradise as well, for the fifty years of its well-earned peace. A land of farms and gardens and pastures, of contented little villages and river-bordered hamlets, and a kindly and devoted people. Coal and iron have left little mark, though the efficient Baedeker (to whom shall we go for guidance on our journeys in the long days to come?), in one of his concise and unpremeditatedly dramatic paragraphs does say: "18 ½ M. *Weilerbach*, for the iron-foundry of Weilerbach and the former summer-house of the Abbots of Echternach, magnificently situated amidst wood"—an antithesis of startling illumination. Protestantism passed it by, except for purposes of plun-

der, and it has always been unanimously and enthusiastically Catholic, with a record for public and private morality that puts any and every other part of Europe to sudden shame.

What is to be its future when the great storm that is cleaning the soiled world of its dust and ashes of false ideals and burnt-out superstitions sweeps away into the hollows of a night that is only in its darkness the promise of a new day? Who shall say? but any one can weave his vision, and to some it already appears that, with the meting out of inadequate earthly reward for irreparable bodily suffering, will come the lands to the east as far as the Kyll, with to the south Saarbours, and the far side of the Moselle to the Hochwald, including ancient Trèves, no longer a forgotten relic of an old imperialism but a greater and better and more potent Hague, a central city of Europe and of peace, where, under the united guarantees of all the states, is permanently sitting a great council of ambassadors for the devising of measures of common interest, the adjustment of international differences, the preservation of a righteous peace between nations, and with authority to suppress any violation of treaties or any wilful aggression of one state against another,

by calling into the field against the offender all the military and naval forces of all the other powers signatory to an European Treaty of Permanent Peace and represented in the council of ambassadors.

Or perhaps Trèves, with surrounding territory within a five-mile radius, might be erected into an international city of council, surrounded by Luxembourg, Belgium, which may be extended to the Moselle and eastward half-way to the Rhine, France, the new frontiers of which would be the old eastern borders of Alsace and Lorraine, and a restored Palatinate limited to the north and east by the Rhine and the Moselle. Central in this circle of guarding states, with all Europe for added defence against any possible recrudescence of local egoism in any place, Trèves might again become a great city of refuge and of Christian righteousness, with noble buildings on its circle of surrounding hills, a centre of religion and education and mercy, guardian of the peace of Europe, a living and glorious symbol of the world enlightenment that came through the clean purging of a war greater than all former wars because the need was greater.

## XVI

### EX TENEBRIS LUX

I HAVE tried to give some idea of the contributions of the lands and the peoples in the western theatre of the war in certain of the fields of art; to note the development of culture, the direction of human happenings, the bearing of great men and women who were leaders in Europe, through an abbreviation of historical records, to justify the giving to the region between the Seine and the Rhine, the Alps and the sea, the name of "Heart of Europe." Such a survey of such a territory must, of necessity, be superficial and incomplete, for too many and wonderful things happened there to be recorded in a volume of limited extent. Chiefly, I have spoken of what could be, and is being, destroyed, but there is much else that is not subject to annihilation at the hands of furious men, the contributions to music, to letters, to the slow-growing spiritual deposit in society through philosophy, theology, and religion.



In music alone the Heart of Europe has done more, and at different times, than any similar area. While the troubadours of the twelfth century came into existence in the sunny lands of Languedoc, it was in Aquitaine, Champagne, and Flanders that the trouvères developed the norm of the troubadours "into something rich and strange," and under the Countess Marie of Champagne created that beautiful and potent fiction of "courteous love," which had issue in so many exquisite phases of human character and made possible a great school of romantic poets. They, under the leadership of Chretien de Troyes, made for the Countess Marie, out of the rude elements that had come from England and Wales through Brittany, the great poems and romances of King Arthur and his knights. The greatest of the trouvères was Adam de la Hâle and he was born in Arras in the year 1240. Long before him, however, Gottfried of Strasbourg, a contemporary of Chretien de Troyes, had made of the tale of Lancelot and Guinevere one of the deathless poems of the world, as Wolfram von Essenbach of Bavaria was to create its great counterpart from the story of Parsifal.

Very slowly in the meantime music had been

working out its wonderful growth from the classical models of SS. Ambrose and Gregory intermingled with the instinctive folk-music of the south, and in the fourteenth century the leadership fell full into the hands of Flanders, where monks and laymen set themselves to the congenial task of building up a new and richer music on polyphonic lines. Brother Hairouet, who was at work about 1420; Binchois, born near Mons and died in 1460; Dufay, born in Hainault and trained in the cathedral at Cambrai, were all, together with the English Dunstable, potent leaders in the great work, laying well the foundations on which a few centuries later was to be erected the vast and magnificent superstructure of Bach and his successors. In the second period, that of the close of the fifteenth century, Antwerp became the centre, Jean de Okeghem, of Termonde, the leader in the intellectualising of music and the establishing it on methodical lines, while in the third period, of the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the following century, Josquin des Pres led the course back toward a purer beauty, though through modes that were increasingly clever in their elaborate virtuosity. After this the lead passed across the Rhine, with memorable

results a century later, when the great cycle, from Bach to Brahms, rounded itself into a perfect ring.

The era-making movements in religion all began outside our territorial limits at Monte Cassino, Cluny, Clairveaux, but it was through St. Benedict of Aniane that Charlemagne at Aix-la-Chapelle effected his regeneration of the Church and his initiation of a new Christian education and culture; St. Bruno, of Cologne, sometime head of the cathedral school of Reims, was the founder of the Order of Carthusians; St. Chrodegang, Archbishop of Metz, brought into existence the Canons Regular of St. Augustine, who introduced into cathedral chapters the order and discipline of monasticism; St. Norbert, of Xanten, created the Order of Prémontré, one of the most beneficent and beautiful of the religious brotherhoods of the Middle Ages, while the "Imitation of Christ," the most purely spiritual and devotional work of the time, was the product of Thomas à Kempis, an obscure monk of the Netherlands. In the development of Christian mysticism the Rhine valley stands pre-eminent, though the greatest of all those of this school of combined thought and vision was Hugh of St. Victor, of

the monastery of Augustinian Canons in Paris, on the banks of the Seine, where now is the Jardin des Plantes. The ancient tradition is that he was born near Ypres, though recent researches seem to indicate that he may have been a son of the Count of Blankenburg in Saxony. In any case, he was the great expositor of sacramental religion and philosophy as Charlemagne's Radbertus Paschasus was the great defender of the true doctrine of Transubstantiation. If, indeed, Hugh of St. Victor was a product of Flanders, then the credit goes there of having given birth to one of the noblest and most penetrating minds the world has known, one that ranks with that greatest pure intellect of all time, St. Thomas Aquinas.

Whether one accepts the mysticism of the Rhine or not does not matter; it was a potent element in the flowering of Christian piety and the development of Catholic theology, and Elizabeth of Schönau, Hildegarde of Bingen, Mary of Ognies, Liutgard of Tongres, Mechtilde of Magdebourg, are all names that connote a poignancy of spiritual experience that proves both the personal exaltation of the time and the quality of the blood that had issue in character such as theirs. This mystical vision of the holy women of the Rhine

is simply an extreme intensification of the same vision that was given in lesser measure and in different ways to all the creative artists, philosophers, and theologians of the Middle Ages, from Othloh of the eleventh to St. Bonaventure of the thirteenth century, and it had a great part in determining and fixing the artistic manifestation of this amazing time. Both as a result and an influence it is vastly important and not to be ignored. Out of it came much of that marvellous symbolism of the mass and the cathedral so explicitly set forth by the monk Durandus and Vincent of Beauvais, and for its good offices here alone the world owes it a deep and lasting gratitude.

One is tempted to go on through other fields where the harvest is plenteous, but an end must be made, and it is here. There remains the question of the issue of it all—whether out of this latest devastation that so adequately follows those of the nineteenth century, of the French Revolution, of Protestantism and the wars of religion, of the Hundred Years' War with England, any compensation may come for the progressive (and as yet unfinished) destruction of the art records of a great past. If we consider alone the wide

ruin in Flanders and Brabant, in Artois and Picardy and Champagne, there seems no possible compensation for what we ourselves knew and now have lost for ever. Nevertheless, the law of the universe is death that life may come; and out of this present death that is so immeasurably more wide-spread and inclusive than any known before, even when the Huns or the Moslems were on their deadly march across Europe, there should come a proportionately fuller life, a "life more abundant," than that which is now in dissolution. If this is so, if we can look across the plains of death and immeasurable destruction to the dimly seen peaks of the mountain frontiers of a new Land of Promise, then we can see Louvain and Liège, Ypres and Arras, Laon and Soissons and Reims pass in the crash and the dim smoke of obliteration, content with their tragic destiny, even as we can see poured out as a new oblation the ten millions of lives, the tears of an hundred millions of those who follow down into the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

Is it all a vain oblation? There is the crucial question and the answer is left with us. This is no war of economic and industrial rivalry, of jealous dynasties, of opposed political theories;

it is not the inevitable result of a malignant diplomacy from Frederick the Great and Metternich to Disraeli and the German Kaiser; it is not even the last act in a drama ushered in by Machiavelli and brought to its denouement at Potsdam. All these and myriad other strands have gone to the weaving of the poisoned shirt of Nessus, but they all are blind agents, tools of a dominant and supreme destiny by which are brought about the events that are only the way of working of an unescapable fate. The war is a culminating catastrophe, but it is as well the greatest mercy ever extended to men, for it may be made the means of a great purging, the atonement for the later sins of the world, the redemption from a wilful blindness and folly that are not consonant with the will of God.

There is a stern propriety in the centring around the Cathedral of Reims of the first phase of the great conflict, and in its slow and implacable demolition. Long ago Heinrich Heine, the poet of the German people, though not himself a German, saw clearly the coming ruin and wrote as follows:

Christianity—and this is its highest merit—has in some degree softened, but it could not destroy, the brutal German

joy of battle. When once the taming talisman, the Cross, breaks in two, the savagery of the old fighters, the senseless Berserker fury of which the northern poets sing and say so much, will gush up anew. That talisman is decayed, and the day will come when it will piteously collapse. Then the old stone gods will rise from the silent ruins, and rub the dust of a thousand years from their eyes. Thor, with his giant's hammer, will at last spring up, and shatter to bits the Gothic cathedrals.

Better than any other, he has declared the nature of this war that arose a century after his death. Thor, the impersonation of conscienceless and unmitigated force, shatters in pieces the Gothic cathedrals because he and they are antitheses and they cannot exist in the same world. Like Barbarossa sitting stonily in his dim cave under ground, century after century, while his beard grows through the rocky table before him, waiting for the call that will send him forth into the world again, primitive force and primitive craft have sullenly awaited the day when the Christian dispensation passes and they issue again into the light. In the fulness of time their day arrives and their first task is to destroy the symbol of their ended bondage. With the name of Christ on their lips and the boast of Christian civilisation in their mouths, the nations and the



peoples forsake Christianity until only the nomenclature remains and the memorials of its power and glory.

Reims falls, but that which built Reims fell long ago, while the devious undermining and the blind sapping began even while the last cubits were being added to its stature, and since then has been only a steady progression in strength and assurance of its antitheses—of materialism, intellectualism, secularism, industrialism, opportunism, efficiency; founded on the coal and iron of the Scar of Europe and on the sinister and ingratiating philosophy that came out of a re-entrant paganism, thrived under the fertilisation of an evolutionary empiricism, flowered in a Nietzsche, a Treitschke, and a Bernhardi. And always it presented itself in a gracious guise; intellectual emancipation, humanitarianism, social service, democratic liberty, evolution, parliamentary government, progress, direct approach of each soul to God. It all sounded fine and high and noble, and on the 30th day of July, 1914, there could have been hardly a thousand men in the world, apart from those in the secret, who would not have said—there were not a thousand in Europe who did not believe—that man in his

regular progress from lower ever to higher things had achieved a plane where the wars and savagery and lies of the past were no longer possible.

And in one week from that fateful 30th of July the cloud castle had dissolved in a rain of blood. Could conviction have come to the world in any other way? Would the diseased body have reacted to a gentle prophylactic, could the Surgeon have spared His knife? Since the knife is used, the answer admits of no dispute, but will it be enough? This is the question that is asked on every battle-field of a world at war; the lesson is set for the learning—will the nations learn? In so far as they have diverged from what Reims stood for; from Leo IX and Gregory VII and Innocent III; from Edward I and Ferdinand III and Louis IX; from Eleanor of Guienne and Blanche of Castile and Margaret of Malines; from St. Bernard, St. Norbert, and St. Anselm; from Albertus Magnus and Hugh of St. Victor and St. Thomas Aquinas, just so far have they to return, bringing with them not empty hands but all the great good winnowed from the harvest of grain and chaff they have reaped in those years of spiritual and material and national disorder that began when the dizzy fabric of mediævalism trembled

to its base at the exile at Avignon and "piteously collapsed" between the nailing at Wittenberg and the sansculotte throning of the "Goddess of Reason" in the desecrated cathedral of Notre Dame. There is good grain in plenty, but it is sowed along with the chaff and the tares, and now for the last harvesting the grain has germinated only to dwindle and die, for the tares have sprung up and choked it and the red garnering is of tares alone.

Men would think, as they follow the scarlet annals of war, that the lesson was sufficiently clear even for pacifists to read as they run, but is it so? France reads and learns, gloriously regenerate, blotting out the memory of old folly with her blood of sacrifice, turning again as her first King Clovis was adjured by St. Remi of Reims, destroying what she worshipped a year ago, worshipping what then, and for two centuries before, she had destroyed. Again France shows the way, traversing it with bleeding feet and with many tears; Russia is learning it, though she had less to unlearn; Belgium must have learned it through her blind martyrdom; but how of the others? Is England learning, and Italy; will Germany learn, and Austria; will America learn,

standing aloof from the smoking altar of sacrifice; will the Church learn, there in trembling isolation while again Peter listens for the crowing of the cock? If not, if when silence comes down on a decimated, an exhausted, a bankrupt world, the old ways are sought again and men go on as before, then the myriad lives and the dreary rain of tears are indeed a vain oblation, and all will be to do over again. God sets no lesson that need not be learned, and unless out of it all comes an old heaven and a new earth, then the lesson is set again, as time after time it was set for imperial Rome, until a century of war and pestilence and famine broke down her insolent pride and made from the ruins of her vainglory a foundation for a new civilisation in the strength of the Christianity she had denied.

And if the lesson is learned by all tongues and all peoples, as we must believe will be, then the horror of human loss, the bitterness of Ypres and Louvain and Reims will receive its compensation, for out of death will come life and no man will have died in vain, no work of art will have perished without a return in kind. To lose Reims and regain after long years the impulse and the power to build after the same fashion would be

more than ample compensation. We have tried for many centuries and have failed; no man has built anything approaching it for seven hundred years, nor has any one matched the statue of Our Lady at Paris, or the "Worship of the Lamb" at Ghent, or the glass of Chartres, or the tapestries of Arras, or the metal work of Dinant and Tournai. There was something lacking, some once indwelling spirit had been taken away, and though we tried to reassure ourselves by our boasting in far-away lines of accomplishment—parliamentary government, manhood suffrage, clever mechanical devices, deductive science, mastery of earth forces hitherto unknown, industrialism, high finance, favourable balance of trade, evolutionary philosophy, public-school systems, vocational training, or what-not; though we even made the effort to exalt the Pantheon and Fifth Avenue to rivalry with Amiens, the Sieges Allee into an emulation of the statues of Reims, the Salon and Luxembourg and Royal Academy above the primitives of Flanders—it was all unconvincing to ourselves and in the end we came to say that, after all, it did not matter anyway, art was, "in the ultimate analysis," only a dispensable amenity of life, which could go on very well without it. Then came the revelation

of 1914 and we saw our foolishness, realising at last that, "amenity" or no, art did indicate the existence in a society of something without which it was bound to decay to the point of extinction; and as the monuments we had despised because they exceeded our own powers of achievement were one by one taken from us, we saw architecture and painting and sculpture and all the other arts in a new light and offered our reverence, too late, to what we had lost for ever.

Whatever the issue of the war, the world can never be the same, but a very different place; and amongst the differences will be a new realisation of the nature and function of art. All the follies of the last fifty years—didacticism, Bavarian illustration, realism, "new art," impressionism, "cubism," boulevardesque and neo-Gothic and revived Roman architecture—all the petty and insincere and premeditated fashions must go, and in their place come a new sincerity, a new sense of self-consecration.

The real things of life are coming into view through the revealing fires of the battle-field, and the new experiences of men confronted at last by everlasting truths. With the destruction of each work of old art comes a new duty that de-

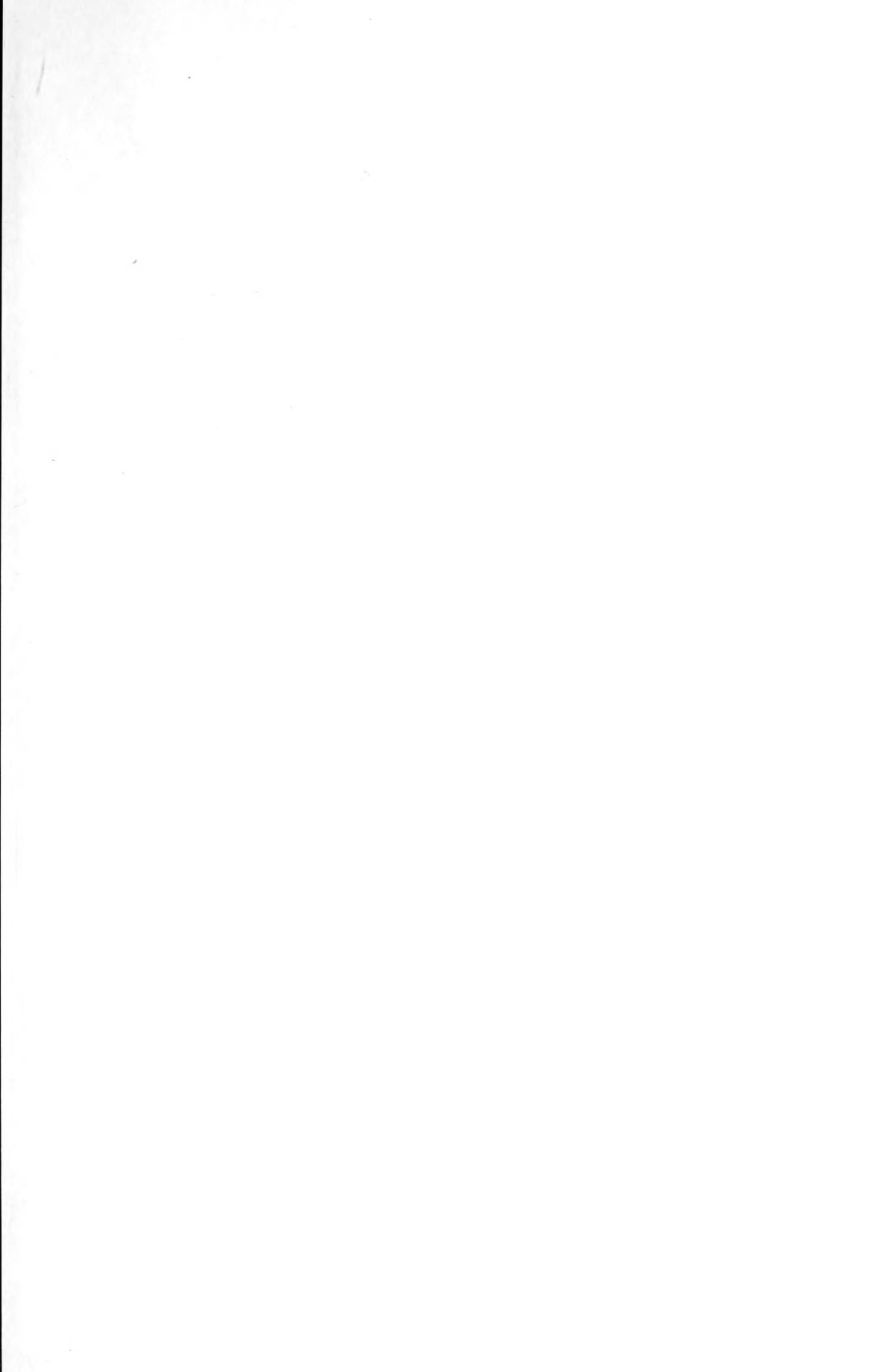
mands all that is best and strongest and most sincere in every man—the duty of making good the loss, in kind; the duty of building a new civilisation and a new culture on the old foundations now revealed through the burning away of the useless cumbrances of futile superstructures; the duty of making a Cathedral of Reims possible again, not through self-conscious and competent premeditation but because at last men have come to their senses, regained their old standard of comparative values, and so can no more fail to build in the spirit of Reims and in reverence for the eternal truths it enshrined and set forth than could those who built it seven centuries ago in the sweat of their brows, the joy of their hearts, and the high devotion of their souls.

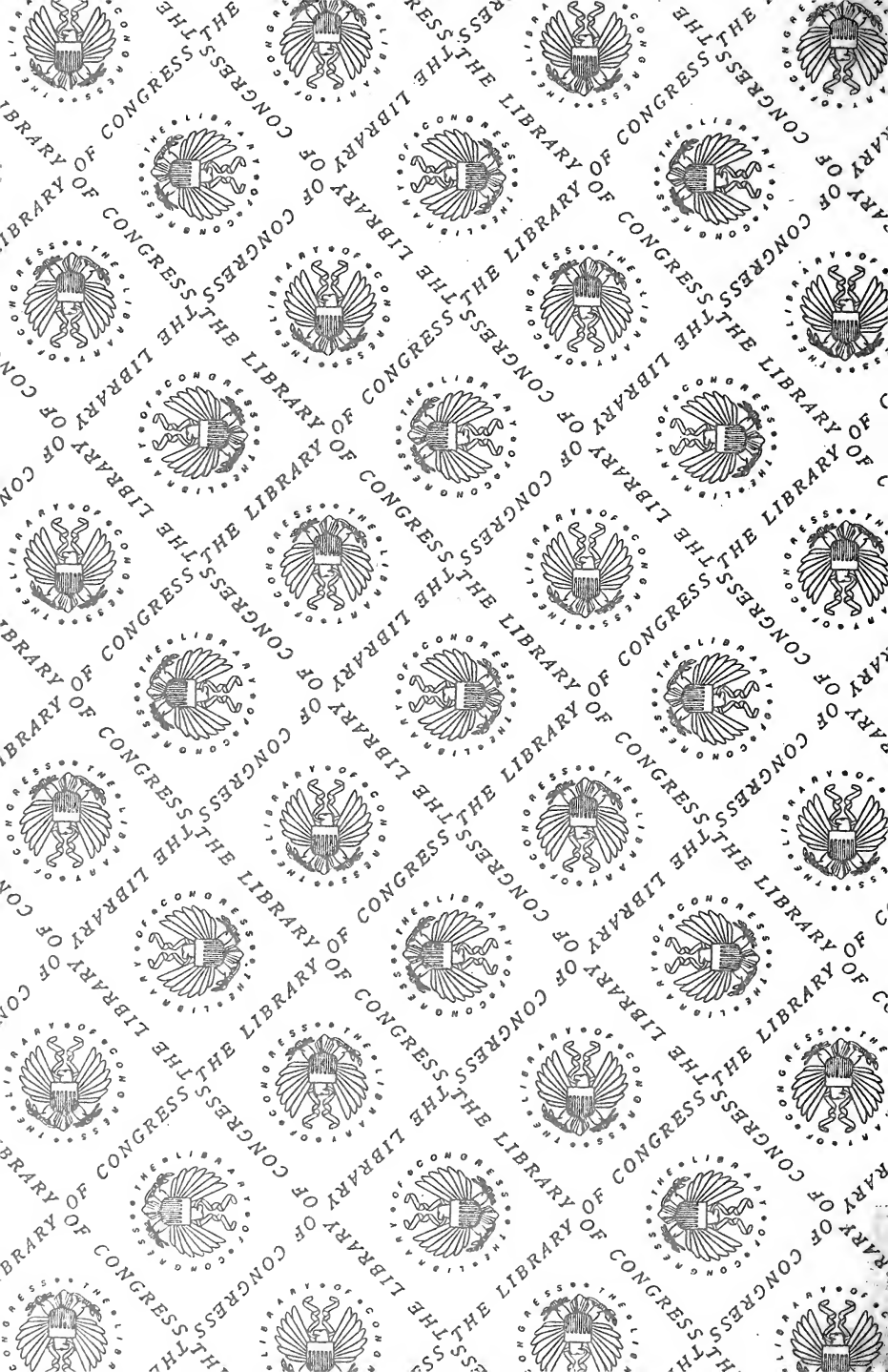
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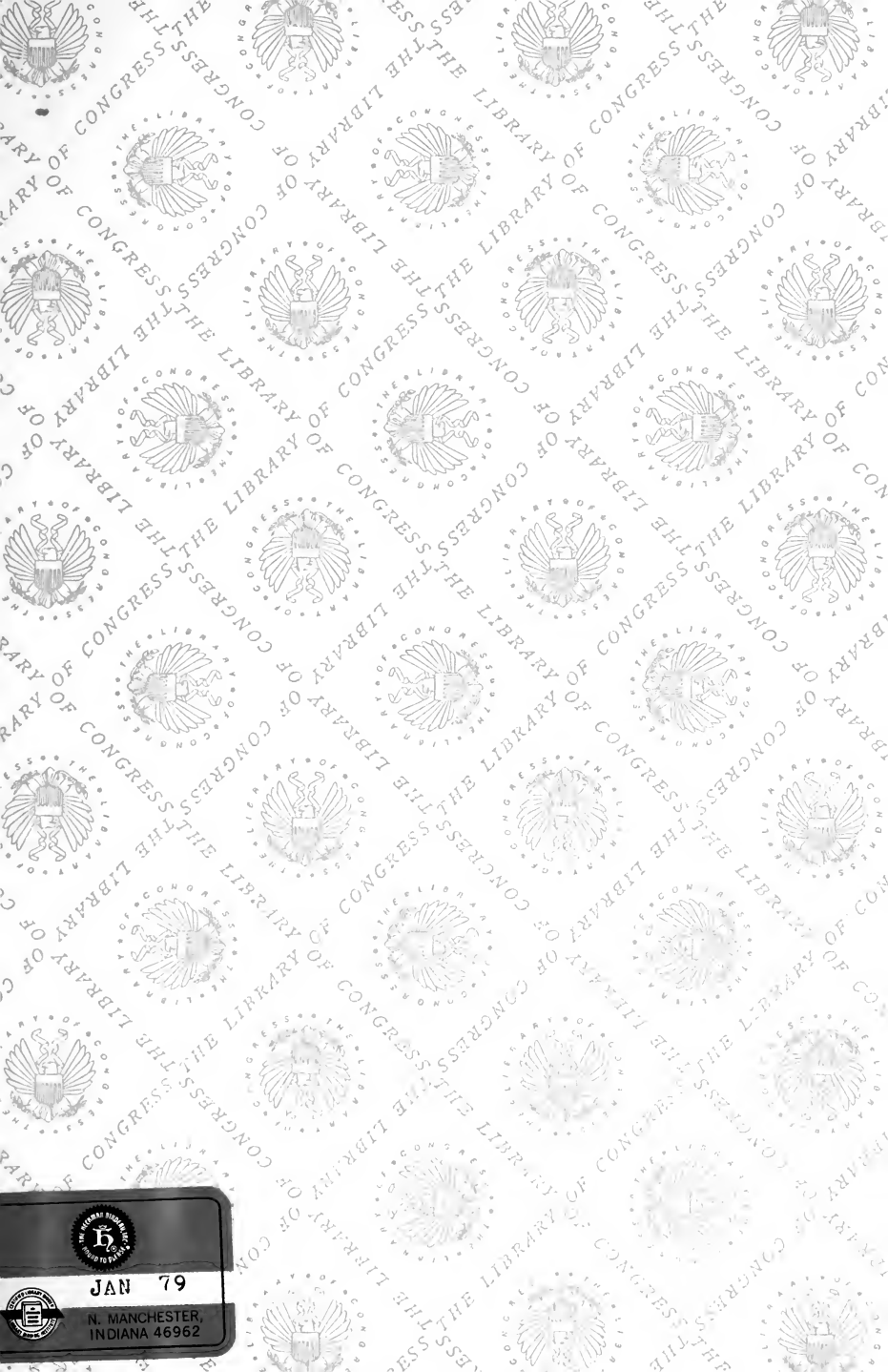












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